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SKETCHES IN ITALY BY J. ADDINGTON SYMONDS.

IN ONE VOLUME.

TAUCHNITZ EDITION.

By the same Author,

NEW ITALIAN SKETCHES . . . . 1 vol.

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# SKETCHES IN ITALY.

BY

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS.

SELECTED FROM "SKETCHES IN ITALY AND GREECE  
AND "SKETCHES AND STUDIES IN ITALY."

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LEIPZIG  
BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1883.

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## PREFATORY NOTE.

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In preparing this Selection of Italian Sketches for the Tauchnitz Collection of English Authors, I have used the text of two volumes already published in England and America. These are my “Sketches in Italy and Greece” (London, Smith and Elder 1879), and “Sketches and Studies in Italy” (London, Smith and Elder 1879). I have been careful to include the more picturesque pieces of these two series, omitting essays upon historical and literary topics, in order that the present volume might assume the character of an Italian Sketch book, and adapt itself to the use of travellers rather than of students.

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS.

DAVOS PLATZ, *Feb. 1883.*



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## SKETCHES IN ITALY.

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### THE CORNICE.

IT was a dull afternoon in February when we left Nice and drove across the mountains to Mentone. Over hill and sea hung a thick mist. Turbia's Roman tower stood up in cheerless solitude, wreathed round with driving vapor, and the rocky nest of Esa seemed suspended in a chaos between sea and sky. Sometimes the fog broke and showed us Villafranca, lying green and flat in the deep blue below; sometimes a distant view of higher peaks swam into sight from the shifting cloud. But the whole scene was desolate. Was it for this that we had left our English home, and travelled from London day and night? At length we reached the edge of the cloud, and jingled down by Roccabruna and the olive-groves, till one by one Mentone's villas came in sight, and at last we found ourselves at the inn door. That night, and all next day and the next night, we heard the hoarse sea beat and thunder on the beach. The rain and wind kept driving from the south, but we consoled ourselves with thinking that the orange-trees and every kind of

flower were drinking in the moisture and waiting to rejoice in sunlight which would come.

It was a Sunday morning when we woke and found that the rain had gone, the sun was shining brightly on the sea, and a clear north wind was blowing cloud and mist away. Out upon the hills we went, not caring much what path we took; for everything was beautiful, and hill and vale were full of garden walks. Through lemon-groves—pale, golden, tender trees—and olives, stretching their gray boughs against the lonely cottage tiles, we climbed, until we reached the pines and heath above. Then I knew the meaning of Theocritus for the first time. We found a well, broad, deep, and clear, with green herbs growing at the bottom, a runlet flowing from it down the rocky steps, maidenhair, black adiantum, and blue violets hanging from the brink and mirrored in the water. This was just the well in *Hylas*. Theocritus has been badly treated. They call him a court poet, dead to Nature, artificial in his pictures. Yet I recognized this fountain by his verse, just as if he had showed me the very spot. Violets grow everywhere, of every shade, from black to lilac. Their stalks are long, and the flowers “nod” upon them, so that I see how the Greeks could make them into chaplets—how Lycidas wore his crown of white violets\* lying by the fireside elbow-deep in withered asphodel, watching the chestnuts in the embers, and softly drinking deep healths to Ageanax far off upon the waves. It is impossible to go wrong

\* This begs the question whether *λευκόιον* does not properly mean snowflake, or some such flower. Violets in Greece, however, were often used for crowns: *ιούτεγαρος* is the epithet of Homer for Aphrodite, and of Aristophanes for Athens.

in these valleys. They are cultivated to the height of about five hundred feet above the sea, in terraces laboriously built up with walls, earthed and manured, and irrigated by means of tanks and aqueducts. Above this level, where the virgin soil has not been yet reclaimed, or where the winds of winter bring down freezing currents from the mountains through a gap or gully of the lower hills, a tangled growth of heaths and arbutus and pines and rosemaries and myrtles continue the vegetation, till it finally ends in bare gray rocks and peaks some thousand feet in height. Far above all signs of cultivation on these arid peaks, you still may see villages and ruined castles, built centuries ago for a protection from the Moorish pirates. To these mountain fastnesses the people of the coast retreated when they descried the sails of their foes on the horizon. In Mentone, not very long ago, old men might be seen who in their youth were said to have been taken captive by the Moors; and many Arabic words have found their way into the patois of the people.

There is something strangely fascinating in the sight of these ruins on the burning rocks, with their black sentinel cypresses, immensely tall and far away. Long years and rain and sunlight have made these castellated eyries one with their native stone. It is hard to trace in their foundations where Nature's workmanship ends and where man's begins. What strange sights the mountain villagers must see! The vast blue plain of the unfurrowed deep, the fairy range of Corsica hung midway between the sea and sky at dawn or sunset, the stars so close above their heads, the deep dew-sprinkled valleys, the green pines! On

penetrating into one of these hill-fortresses, you find that it is a whole village, with a church and castle and piazza, some few feet square, huddled together on a narrow platform. We met one day three magnates of Gorbio taking a morning stroll backwards and forwards, up and down their tiny square. Vehemently gesticulating, loudly chattering, they talked as though they had not seen each other for ten years, and were but just unloading their budgets of accumulated news. Yet these three men probably had lived, eaten, drunk, and talked together from the cradle to that hour: so true it is that use and custom quicken all our powers, especially of gossiping and scandal-mongering. St. Agnese is the highest and most notable of all these villages. The cold and heat upon its absolutely barren rock must be alike intolerable. In appearance it is not unlike the Etruscan towns of Central Italy; but there is something, of course, far more imposing in the immense antiquity and the historical associations of a Narni, a Fiesole, a Chiusi, or an Orvieto. Sea-life and rusticity strike a different note from that of those Apennine-girdled seats of dead civilization, in which nations, arts, and religions have gone by and left but few traces—some wrecks of giant walls, some excavated tombs, some shrines, where monks still sing and pray above the relics of the founders of once world-shaking, now almost forgotten, orders. Here at Mentone there is none of this; the idyllic is the true note, and Theocritus is still alive.

We do not often scale these altitudes, but keep along the terraced glades by the side of olive-shaded streams. The violets, instead of peeping shyly from hedgerows, fall in ripples and cascades over mossy

walls among maidenhair and spleenworts. They are very sweet, and the sound of trickling water seems to mingle with their fragrance in a most delicious harmony. Sound, smell, and hue make up one chord, the sense of which is pure and perfect peace. The country-people are kind, letting us pass everywhere, so that we make our way along their aqueducts and through their gardens, under laden lemon-boughs, the pale fruit dangling at our ears, and swinging showers of scented dew upon us as we pass. Far better, however, than lemon or orange trees, are the olives. Some of these are immensely old, numbering, it is said, five centuries, so that Petrarch may almost have rested beneath their shade on his way to Avignon. These veterans are cavernous with age: gnarled, split, and twisted trunks, throwing out arms that break into a hundred branches; every branch distinct, and feathered with innumerable sparks and spikelets of white, wavy, greenish light. These are the leaves, and the stems are gray with lichens. The sky and sea—two blues, one full of sunlight and the other purple—set these fountains of perennial brightness like gems in lapis lazuli. At a distance the same olives look hoary and soft—a veil of woven light or luminous haze. When the wind blows their branches all one way, they ripple like a sea of silver. But underneath their covert, in the shade, gray periwinkles wind among the snowy drift of allium. The narcissus sends its arrowy fragrance through the air, while, far and wide, red anemones burn like fire, with interchange of blue and lilac buds, white arums, orchises, and pink gladiolus. Wandering there, and seeing the pale flowers, stars white and pink and odorous, we dream of Olivet, or the grave

Garden of the Agony, and the trees seem always whispering of sacred things. How people can blaspheme against the olives, and call them imitations of the willow, or complain that they are shabby shrubs, I do not know.\*

This shore would stand for Shelley's Island of Epipsychedion, or the golden age which Empedocles describes, when the mild nations worshipped Aphrodite with incense and the images of beasts and yellow honey, and no blood was spilled upon her altars—when "the trees flourished with perennial leaves and fruit, and ample crops adorned their boughs through all the year." This even now is literally true of the lemon-groves, which do not cease to flower and ripen. Everything fits in to complete the reproduction of Greek pastoral life. The goats eat cytisus and myrtle on the shore; a whole flock gathered round me as I sat beneath a tuft of golden green euphorbia the other day, and nibbled bread from my hands. The frog still croaks by tank and fountain, "whom the Muses have ordained to sing for aye," in spite of Bion's death. The narcissus, anemone, and hyacinth still tell their tales of love and death. Hesper still gazes on the shepherd from the mountain-head. The slender cypresses still vibrate, the pines murmur. Pan sleeps in noontide heat, and goatherds and wayfaring men lie down to slumber by the roadside, under olive-boughs in which cicadas sing. The little villages high up are just as

\* Olive-trees must be studied at Mentone or San Remo, in Corfu, at Tivoli, on the coast between Syracuse and Catania, or on the lowlands of Apulia. The stunted but productive trees of the Rhone valley, for example, are no real measure of the beauty they can exhibit.

white, the mountains just as gray and shadowy, when evening falls. Nothing is changed—except ourselves. I expect to find a statue of Priapus or pastoral Pan, hung with wreaths of flowers—the meal-cake, honey, and spilt wine upon his altar, and young boys and maidens dancing round. Surely, in some far-off glade, by the side of lemon-grove or garden, near the village, there must be still a pagan remnant of glad Nature-worship. Surely I shall chance upon some Thyrsis piping in the pine-tree shade, or Daphne flying from the arms of Phœbus. So I dream until I come upon the Calvary set on a solitary hillock, with its prayer-steps lending a wide prospect across the olives and the orange-trees, and the broad valleys, to immeasurable skies and purple seas. There is the iron cross, the wounded heart, the spear, the reed, the nails, the crown of thorns, the cup of sacrificial blood, the title, with its superscription royal and divine. The other day we crossed a brook and entered a lemon-field, rich with blossoms and carpeted with red anemones. Everything basked in sunlight and glittered with exceeding brilliancy of hue. A tiny white chapel stood in a corner of the enclosure. Two iron-grated windows let me see inside: it was a bare place, containing nothing but a wooden praying-desk, black and worm-eaten, an altar with its candles and no flowers, and above the altar a square picture brown with age. On the floor were scattered several pence, and in a vase above the holy-water vessel stood some withered hyacinths. As my sight became accustomed to the gloom, I could see from the darkness of the picture a pale Christ nailed to the cross with agonizing upward eyes and ashy aureole above the bleeding thorns. Thus I stepped

suddenly away from the outward pomp and bravery of nature to the inward aspirations, agonies, and martyrdoms of man—from Greek legends of the past to the real Christian present—and I remembered that an illimitable prospect has been opened to the world, that in spite of ourselves we must turn our eyes heavenward, inward, to the infinite unseen beyond us and within our souls. Nothing can take us back to Phœbus or to Pan. Nothing can again identify us with the simple, natural earth. “*Une immense espérance a traversé la terre,*” and these chapels, with their deep significances, lurk in the fair landscape like the cares of real life among our dreams of art, or like a fear of death and the hereafter in the midst of opera music. It is a strange contrast. The worship of men in those old times was symbolized by dances in the evening, banquets, libations, and mirth-making. “Euphrosyne” was alike the goddess of the righteous mind and of the merry heart. Old withered women telling their rosaries at dusk; belated shepherds crossing themselves beneath the stars when they pass the chapel; maidens weighed down with Margaret’s anguish of unhappy love; youths vowing their life to contemplation in secluded cloisters—these are the human forms which gather round such chapels; and the motto of the worshippers consists in this, “Do often violence to thy desire.” In the Tyrol we have seen whole villages praying together at daybreak before their day’s work, singing their *Miserere* and their *Gloria* and their *Dies Iræ* to the sound of crashing organs and jangling bells; appealing in the midst of Nature’s splendor to the Spirit which is above Nature, which dwells in darkness rather than light, and loves the yearnings and

contentions of our soul more than its summer gladness and peace. Even the olives here tell more to us of Olivet and the Garden than of the oil-press and the wrestling-ground. The lilies carry us to the Sermon on the Mount, and teach humility, instead of summoning up some legend of a god's love for a mortal. The hillside tanks and running streams, and water-brooks swollen by sudden rain, speak of Palestine. We call the white flowers stars of Bethlehem. The large sceptre-reed; the fig-tree, lingering in barrenness when other trees are full of fruit; the locust-beans of the Caruba:—for one suggestion of Greek idylls there is yet another, of far deeper, dearer power.

But who can resist the influence of Greek ideas at the Cape St. Martin? Down to the verge of the sea stretch the tall, twisted stems of Levant pines, and on the caverned limestone breaks the deep blue water. Dazzling as marble are these rocks, pointed and honey-combed with constant dashing of the restless sea, tufted with corallines and gray and purple sea-weeds in the little pools, but hard and dry and rough above tide level. Nor does the sea always lap them quietly; for the last few days it has come tumbling in, roaring and raging on the beach with huge waves crystalline in their transparency, and maned with fleecy spray. Such were the rocks and such the swell of breakers when Ulysses grasped the shore after his long swim. Samphire, very salt and fragrant, grows in the rocky honey-comb; then lentisk and beach-loving myrtle, both exceeding green and bushy; then rosemary and euphorbia above the reach of spray. Fishermen, with their long reeds, sit lazily perched upon black rocks above blue waves, sunning themselves as much as seeking sport.

One distant tip of snow, seen far away behind the hills, reminds us of an alien, unremembered winter. While dreaming there this fancy came into my head: Polyphemus was born yonder in the Gorbio Valley. There he fed his sheep and goats, and on the hills found scanty pasture for his kine. He and his mother lived in the white house by the cypress near the stream where tulips grow. Young Galatea, nursed in the caverns of these rocks, white as the foam, and shy as the sea fishes, came one morning up the valley to pick mountain hyacinths, and little Polyphemus led the way. He knew where violets and sweet narcissus grew, as well as Galatea where pink coralline and spreading sea-flowers with their waving arms. But Galatea, having filled her lap with bluebells, quite forgot the leaping kids, and piping Cyclops, and cool summer caves, and yellow honey, and black ivy, and sweet vine, and water cold as Alpine snow. Down the swift streamlet she danced laughingly, and made herself once more bitter with the sea. But Polyphemus remained—hungry, sad, gazing on the barren sea, and piping to the mockery of its waves.

Filled with these Greek fancies, it is strange to come upon a little sandstone dell furrowed by trickling streams and overgrown with English primroses; or to enter the village of Roccabruna, with its mediæval castle and the motto on its walls, *Tempora labuntur tacitisque senescimus annis*. A true motto for the town, where ~~the~~ the butcher comes but once a week, and where men and boys, and dogs and palms and lemon-trees, grow up and flourish and decay in the same hollow of the sunny mountain-side. Into the hard conglomerate of the hill the town is built; house walls and precipices

mortised into one another, dovetailed by the art of years gone by, and riveted by age. The same plants grow from both alike—spurge, cistus, rue, and henbane, constant to the desolation of abandoned dwellings. From the castle you look down on roofs, brown tiles and chimney-pots, set one above the other like a big card-castle. Each house has its foot on a neighbor's neck, and its shoulder set against the native stone. The streets meander in and out, and up and down, overarched and balconied, but very clean. They swarm with children, healthy, happy little monkeys, who grow fat on salt fish and yellow polenta, with oil and sun *ad libitum*.

At night from Roccabruna you may see the flaring gas-lamps of the gaming-house at Monaco, that Armida's garden of the nineteenth century. It is the sunniest and most sheltered spot of all the coast. Long ago Lucan said of Monaco, "*Non Corus in illum jus habet aut Zephyrus;*" winter never comes to nip its tangled cactuses and aloes and geraniums. The air swoons with the scent of lemon-groves; tall palm-trees wave their graceful branches by the shore; music of the softest and the loudest swells from the palace; cool corridors and sunny seats stand ready for the noontide heat or evening calm; without, are olive-gardens, green and fresh and full of flowers! But the witch herself holds her high court and never-ending festival of sin in the painted banquet-halls and among the green tables.

Let us leave this scene and turn with the country-folk of Roccabruna to St. Michael's Church at Mentone. High above the sea it stands, and from its open doors you look across the mountains with their olive-trees.

Inside the church is a seething mass of country-folk and towns-people, mostly women, and these almost all old, but picturesque beyond description; kerchiefs of every color, wrinkles of every shape and depth, skins of every tone of brown and yellow, voices of every gruffness, shrillness, strength, and weakness. Wherever an empty corner can be found, it is soon filled by tottering babies and mischievous children. The country-women come with their large dangling earrings of thin gold, wearing pink tulips or lemon-buds in their black hair. A low buzz of gossiping and mutual recognition keeps the air alive. The whole service seems a holiday—a general enjoyment of gala dresses and friendly greetings, very different from the silence, immobility, and *noli me tangere* aspect of an English congregation. Over all drones, rattles, snores, and shrieks the organ; wailing, querulous, asthmatic, incomplete, its everlasting nasal chant—always beginning, never ending, through a range of two or three notes ground into one monotony. The voices of the congregation rise and sink above it. These Southern people, like the Arabs, the Apulians, and the Spaniards, seem to find their music in a hurdy-gurdy swell of sound. The other day we met a little girl, walking and spinning, and singing all the while, whose song was just another version of this chant. It has a discontented plaintive wail, as if it came from some vast age, and were a cousin of primeval winds.

At first sight, by the side of Mentone, San Remo is sadly prosaic. The valleys seem to sprawl, and the universal olives are monotonously gray upon their thick clay soil. Yet the wealth of flowers in the fat earth is wonderful. One might fancy one's self in a weedy

farm flower-bed invaded by stray oats and beans and cabbages and garlic from the kitchen-garden. The country does not suggest a single Greek idea. It has no form or outline—no barren peaks, no spare and difficult vegetation. The beauty is rich but tame—valleys green with oats and corn, blossoming cherry-trees and sweet bean-fields, figs coming into leaf, and arrowy bay-trees by the side of sparkling streams: here and there a broken aqueduct or rainbow bridge hung with maidenhair and brier and clematis and sarsaparilla.

In the cathedral church of San Siro on Good-Friday they hang the columns and the windows with black; they cover the pictures and deface the altar; above the high-altar they raise a crucifix, and below they place a catafalque with the effigy of the dead Christ. To this sad symbol they address their prayers and incense, chant their “litanies and lourries,” and clash the rattles which commemorate their rage against the traitor Judas. So far have we already passed away from the Greek feeling of Mentone. As I listened to the hideous din, I could not but remember the Theocritean burial of Adonis. Two funeral beds prepared: two feasts recurring in the spring-time of the year. What a difference beneath this superficial similarity—*καλὸς νέκυς οἴα καθεύδων*—*attritus aegra macie*. But the fast of Good-Friday is followed by the festival of Easter. That, after all, is the chief difference.

After leaving the cathedral we saw a pretty picture in a dull old street of San Remo—three children leaning from a window, blowing bubbles. The bubbles floated down the street, of every color; round and trembling, like the dreams of life which children dream.

The town is certainly most picturesque. It resembles a huge glacier of houses poured over a wedge of rock, running down the sides and along the ridge, and spreading itself into a fan between two torrents on the shore below. House over house, with balcony and staircase, convent turret and church tower, palm-trees and olives, roof gardens and clinging creepers—this white cataract of buildings streams downward from the lazар-house and sanctuary and sandstone quarries on the hill. It is a mass of streets placed close above each other, and linked together with arms and arches of solid masonry, as a protection from the earthquakes which are frequent at San Remo. The walls are tall, and form a labyrinth of gloomy passages and treacherous blind alleys, where the Moors of old might meet with a ferocious welcome. Indeed, San Remo is a fortress as well as a dwelling-place. Over its gateways may still be traced the pipes for molten lead, and on its walls the eyeloops for arrows, with brackets for the feet of archers. Masses of building have been shaken down by earthquakes. The ruins of what once were houses gape with blackened chimneys and dark forlorn cellars; mazes of fungus and unhealthy weeds among the still secure habitations. Hardly a ray of light penetrates the streets; one learns the meaning of the Italian word *uggia* from their cold and gloom. During the day they are deserted by every one but babies and witchlike old women—some gossiping, some sitting vacant at the house-door, some spinning or weaving, or minding little children—ugly and ancient as are their own homes, yet clean as are the streets. The younger population goes afield; the men on mules laden for the hills, the women burdened like mules with heavy

and disgusting loads. It is an exceptionally good-looking race: tall, well-grown, and strong. But to the streets again. The shops in the upper town are few, chiefly wine-booths and stalls for the sale of salt fish, eggs, and bread, or cobblers' and tinkers' ware. Notwithstanding the darkness of their dwellings, the people have a love of flowers; azaleas lean from their windows, and vines, carefully protected by a sheath of brick-work, climb the six stories, to blossom out into a pergola upon the roof. Look at that mass of greenery and colors, dimly seen from beneath, with a yellow cat sunning herself upon the parapet! To reach such a garden and such sunlight who would not mount six stories and thread a labyrinth of passages? I should prefer a room upon the east side of the town, looking southward to the Molo and the sea, with a sound of water beneath, and a palm soaring up to fan my window with his feathery leaves.

The shrines are little spots of brightness in the gloomy streets. Madonna with a sword; Christ holding his pierced and bleeding heart; l'Eterno Padre pointing to the dead Son stretched upon his knee; some souls in torment; St. Roch reminding us of old plagues by the spot upon his thigh—these are the symbols of the shrines. Before them stand rows of pots filled with gilly-flowers, placed there by pious, simple, praying hands—by maidens come to tell their sorrows to our Lady rich in sorrow, by old women bent and shrivelled, in hopes of paradise or gratitude for happy days, when Madonna kept Cecchino faithful to his home, or saved the baby from the fever.

Lower down, between the sea and the hill, is the municipal, aristocratic, ecclesiastical quarter of San

Remo. There stands the Palace Borea—a truly princely pile, built in the last Renaissance style of splendor, with sea-nymphs and dolphins, and satyric heads, half lips, half leafage, round about its doors and windows. Once it formed the dwelling of a feudal family, but now it is a roomy ant-hill of a hundred houses, shops, and offices, the Boreas of to-day retaining but a portion of one flat, and making profit of the rest. There, too, are the barracks and the syndic's hall; the Jesuits' school, crowded with boys and girls; the shops for clothes, confectionery, and trinkets; the piazza, with its fountain and tasseled planes, and flowery chestnut-trees, a mass of greenery. Under these trees the idlers lounge, boys play at leap-frog, men at bowls. Women in San Remo work all day, but men and boys play for the most part at bowls or toss-penny or leap-frog or morra. San Siro, the cathedral, stands at one end of the square. Do not go inside; it has a sickly smell of immemorial incense and garlic, undefinable and horrible. Far better looks San Siro from the parapet above the torrent. There you see its irregular half-Gothic outline across a tangle of lemon-trees and olives. The stream rushes by through high walls covered with creepers, spanned by ferny bridges, feathered by one or two old tufty palms. And over all rises the ancient turret of San Siro, like a Spanish giralda, a minaret of pinnacles and pyramids and dome bubbles, with windows showing heavy bells, old clocks, and sundials painted on the walls, and a cupola of green and yellow tiles like serpent-scales, to crown the whole. The sea lies beyond, and the house-roofs break it with gray horizontal lines. Then there are convents, legions of them, large white edifices, Jesuitical apparently for

the most part, clang ing importunate bells, leaning rose-blossoms and cypress-boughs over their jealous walls.

Lastly, there is the port—the mole running out into the sea, the quay planted with plane-trees, and the fishing-boats—by which San Remo is connected with the naval glory of the past—with the Riviera that gave birth to Columbus—with the Liguria that the Dorias ruled—with the great name of Genoa. The port is empty enough now; but from the pier you look back on San Remo and its circling hills, a jewelled town set in illimitable olive grayness. The quay seems also to be the cattle-market. There the small buff cows of North Italy repose after their long voyage or march, kneeling on the sandy ground or rubbing their sides against the wooden cross awry with age and shorn of all its symbols. Lambs frisk among the boats; impudent kids nibble the drooping ears of patient mules. Hinds in white jackets and knee-breeches made of skin lead shaggy rams and fiercely bearded goats, ready to butt at every barking dog, and always seeking opportunities of flight. Farmers and parish priests in black petticoats feel the cattle and dispute about the price, or whet their bargains with a draught of wine. Meanwhile the nets are brought on shore glittering with the fry of sardines, which are cooked like white-bait, with cuttlefish—amorphous objects stretching shiny feelers on the hot, dry sand—and prickly purple eggs of the sea-urchin. Women go about their labor through the throng, some carrying stones upon their heads, or unloading boats and bearing planks of wood in single file, two marching side by side beneath one load of lime, others scarcely visible under a stack of oats, another with her baby in its cradle fast asleep.

San Remo has an elder brother among the hills, which is called San Romolo, after one of the old bishops of Genoa. Who San Remo was is buried in remote antiquity; but his town has prospered, while of San Romolo nothing remains but a ruined hill-convent among pine-trees. The old convent is worth visiting. Its road carries you into the heart of the sierra which surrounds San Remo, a hill-country something like the Jura, undulating and green to the very top with maritime pines and pinasters. Riding up, you hear all manner of Alpine sounds; brawling streams, tinkling cow-bells, and herdsmen calling to each other on the slopes. Beneath you lies San Remo, scarcely visible; and over it the great sea rises ever so far into the sky, until the white sails hang in air, and cloud and sea-line melt into each other indistinguishably. Spanish chestnuts surround the monastery, with bright blue gentians, hepaticas, forget-me-nots, and primroses about their roots. The house itself is perched on a knoll with ample prospect to the sea and to the mountains, very near to heaven, within a theatre of noble contemplations and soul-stirring thoughts. If Mentone spoke to me of the poetry of Greek pastoral life, this convent speaks of mediæval monasticism—of solitude with God, above, beneath, and all around, of silence and repose from agitating cares, of continuity in prayer, and changelessness of daily life. Some precepts of the *Imitatio* came into my mind: “Be never wholly idle; read or write, pray or meditate, or work with diligence for the common needs.” “Praiseworthy is it for the religious man to go abroad but seldom, and to seem to shun, and keep his eyes from men.” “Sweet is the cell when it is often sought, but if we gad about, it wearies us by its seclusion.” Then I

thought of the monks so living in this solitude; their cell windows looking across the valley to the sea, through summer and winter, under sun and stars. Then would they read or write, what long melodious hours! or would they pray, what stations on the pine-clad hills! or would they toil, what terraces to build and plant with corn, what flowers to tend, what cows to milk and pasture, what wood to cut, what fir-cones to gather for the winter fire! or should they yearn for silence, silence from their comrades of the solitude, what whispering-galleries of God, where never human voice breaks loudly, but winds and streams and lonely birds disturb the awful stillness! In such a hermitage as this, only more wild, lived St. Francis of Assisi, among the Apennines.\* It was there that he learned the tongues of beasts and birds, and preached them sermons. Stretched for hours motionless on the bare rocks, colored like them and rough like them in his brown peasant's serge, he prayed and meditated, saw the vision of Christ crucified, and planned his order to regenerate a vicious age. So still he lay, so long, so like a stone, so gentle were his eyes, so kind and low his voice, that the mice nibbled bread-crumbs from his wallet, lizards ran over him, and larks sang to him in the air. There, too, in those long, solitary vigils, the Spirit of God came upon him, and the spirit of Nature was even as God's Spirit, and he sang: "Laudato sia Dio mio Signore, con tutte le creature, specialmente messer lo frate sole; per suor luna, e per le stelle; per frate vento e per l'aire, e nuvolo, e sereno e ogni tempo." Half the value of this hymn would be lost were we to forget how it was written, in what solitudes and mountains far from men, or to ticket it

\* Dante, Par. xi. 106.

with some abstract word like Pantheism. Pantheism it is not; but an acknowledgment of that brotherhood, beneath the love of God, by which the sun and moon and stars, and wind and air and cloud, and clearness and all weather, and all creatures, are bound together with the soul of man.

Few, of course, were like St. Francis. Probably no monk of San Romolo was inspired with his enthusiasm for humanity, or had his revelation of the Divine Spirit inherent in the world. Still fewer can have felt the aesthetic charm of nature but most vaguely. It was as much as they could boast, if they kept steadily to the rule of their order, and attended to the concerns each of his own soul. A terrible selfishness, if rightly considered; but one which accorded with the delusion that this world is a cave of care, the other world a place of torture or undying bliss, death the prime object of our meditation, and life-long abandonment of our fellow-men the highest mode of existence. Why, then, should monks, so persuaded of the riddle of the earth, have placed themselves in scenes so beautiful? Why rose the Camaldolis and Chartreuses over Europe? white convents on the brows of lofty hills, among the rustling boughs of Vallombrosas, in the grassy meadows of Engelbergs—always the eyries of Nature's lovers, men smitten with the loveliness of earth? There is surely some meaning in these poetic stations.

Here is a sentence of the *Imitatio* which throws some light upon the hymn of St. Francis and the sites of Benedictine monasteries, by explaining the value of natural beauty for monks who spent their life in studying death: "If thy heart were right, then would every creature be to thee a mirror of life, and a book of holy doctrine. There is no creature so small and vile

that does not show forth the goodness of God." With this sentence bound about their foreheads walked Fra Angelo and St. Francis. To men like them the mountain valleys and the skies, and all that they contained, were full of deep significance. Though they reasoned "*de conditione humance miseriae*," and "*de contemptu mundi*," yet the whole world was a pageant of God's glory, a testimony to his goodness. Their chastened senses, pure hearts, and simple wills were as wings by which they soared above the things of earth and sent the music of their souls aloft with every other creature in the symphony of praise. To them, as to Blake, the sun was no mere blazing disk or ball, but "an innumerable company of the heavenly host singing, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.'" To them the winds were brothers, and the streams were sisters—brethren in common dependence upon God their Father, brethren in common consecration to his service, brethren by blood, brethren by vows of holiness. Unquestioning faith rendered this world no puzzle; they overlooked the things of sense because the spiritual things were ever present and as clear as day. Yet did they not forget that spiritual things are symbolized by things of sense; and so the smallest herb of grass was vital to their tranquil contemplations. We, who have lost sight of the invisible world, who set our affections more on things of earth, fancy that because these monks despised the world, and did not write about its landscapes, therefore they were dead to its beauty. This is mere vanity: the mountains, stars, seas, fields, and living things were only swallowed up in the one thought of God, and made subordinate to the awfulness of human destinies. We, to whom hills are hills, and seas are seas, and stars are ponderable quantities, speak, write,

and reason of them as of objects interesting in themselves. The monks were less ostensibly concerned about such things, because they only found in them the vestibules and symbols of a hidden mystery.

The contrast between the Greek and mediæval modes of regarding Nature is not a little remarkable. Both Greeks and monks, judged by nineteenth-century standards, were unobservant of natural beauties. They make but brief and general remarks upon landscapes and the like. The *ποντίων τε κυμάτων ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα* is very rare. But the Greeks stopped at the threshold of Nature; the forces they found there, the gods, were inherent in Nature and distinct. They did not, like the monks, place one spiritual power, omnipotent and omnipresent, above all, and see in Nature lessons of divine government. We ourselves, having somewhat overstrained the latter point of view, are now apt to return vaguely to Greek fancies. Perhaps, too, we talk so much about scenery because it is *scenery* to us, and the life has gone out of it.

I cannot leave the Cornice without one word about a place which lies between Mentone and San Remo. Bordighera has a beauty which is quite distinct from both. Palms are its chief characteristic. They lean against the garden walls, and feather the wells outside the town, where women come with brazen pitchers to draw water. In some of the marshy tangles of the plain they spring from a thick undergrowth of spiky leaves, and rear their tall aerial arms against the deep blue background of the sea or darker purple of the distant hills. White pigeons fly about among their branches, and the air is loud with cooings and with rustlings, and the hoarser croaking of innumerable frogs. Then, in the olive-groves that stretch along the

level shore, are labyrinths of rare and curious plants, painted tulips and white periwinkles, flinging their light of blossoms and dark, glossy leaves down the swift channels of the brawling streams. On each side of the rivulets they grow, like sister cataracts of flowers instead of spray. At night fresh stars come out along the coast, beneath the stars of heaven; for you can see the lamps of Ventimiglia and Mentone and Monaco, and, far away, the light-houses upon the promontories of Antibes and the Estrelles. At dawn, a vision of Corsica grows from the sea. The island lies eighty miles away, but one can trace the dark strip of irregular peaks glowing amid the gold and purple of the rising sun. If the air is clear and bright, the snows and overvaulting clouds which crown its mountains shine all day, and glitter like an apparition in the bright blue sky. "Phantom fair," half raised above the sea, it stands, as unreal and transparent as the moon when seen in April sunlight, yet not to be confounded with the shape of any cloud. If Mentone speaks of Greek legends, and San Romolo restores the monastic past, we feel ourselves at Bordighera transported to the East; and lying under its tall palms can fancy ourselves at Tyre or Daphne, or in the gardens of a Moslem prince.

NOTE.—Dec., 1873. My old impressions are renewed and confirmed by a third visit after seven years, to this coast. For purely idyllic loveliness the Cornice is surpassed by nothing in the South. A very few spots in Sicily, the road between Castellamare and Amalfi, and the island of Corfu, are its only rivals in this style of scenery. From Cannes to Sestri is one continuous line of exquisitely modulated landscape beauty, which can only be fully appreciated by travellers in carriage or on foot.

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## S I E N A.

AFTER leaving the valley of the Arno at Empoli, the railway enters a country which rises into earthy hills of no great height, and spreads out at intervals into broad tracts of cultivated lowland. Geologically speaking, this portion of Tuscany consists of loam and sandy deposits, forming the basin between two mountain-ranges—the Apennines and the chalk hills of the western coast of Central Italy. Seen from the eminence of some old Tuscan turret, this champaign country has a stern and arid aspect. The earth is gray and dusty, the forms of hill and valley are austere and monotonous; even the vegetation seems to sympathize with the uninteresting soil from which it springs. A few spare olives cast their shadows on the lower slopes; here and there a copse of oakwood and acacia marks the course of some small rivulet; rye-fields, gray beneath the wind, clothe the hill-sides with scanty verdure. Every knoll is crowned with a village—brown roofs and white house-fronts clustered together on the edge of cliffs, and rising into the campanile or antique tower, which tells so many stories of bygone wars and decayed civilizations.

Beneath these villages stand groups of stone pines clearly visible upon the naked country, cypresses like spires beside the square white walls of convent or of villa, patches of dark foliage, showing where the ilex

and the laurel and the myrtle hide thick tangles of rose-trees and jessamines in ancient gardens. Nothing can exceed the barren aspect of this country in mid-winter: it resembles an exaggerated Sussex, without verdure to relieve the rolling lines of down and hill and valley; beautiful yet by reason of its frequent villages and lucid air and infinitely subtle curves of mountain-ridges. But when spring comes, a light and beauty break upon this gloomy soil; the whole is covered with a delicate green veil of rising crops and fresh foliage, and the immense distances which may be seen from every height are blue with cloud-shadows or rosy in the light of sunset.

Of all the towns of Lower Tuscany, none is more celebrated than Siena. It stands in the very centre of the district which I have attempted to describe, crowning one of its most considerable heights, and commanding one of its most extensive plains. As a city, it is a typical representative of those numerous Italian towns whose origin is buried in remote antiquity, which have formed the seat of three civilizations, and which still maintain a vigorous vitality upon their ancient soil. Its site is Etruscan, its name is Roman, but the town itself owes all its interest and beauty to the artists and the statesmen and the warriors of the Middle Ages. A single glance at Siena from one of the slopes on the northern side will show how truly mediæval is its character. A city wall follows the outline of the hill, from which the towers of the cathedral and the palace, with other cupolas and red-brick campanili, spring; while cypresses and olive-gardens stretch downward to the plain. There

is not a single Palladian façade or Renaissance portico to interrupt the unity of the effect. Over all, in the distance, rises Monte Amiata, melting imperceptibly into sky and plain.

The three most striking objects of interest in Siena maintain the character of mediæval individuality by which the town is marked. They are the public palace, the cathedral, and the house of St. Catherine. The civil life, the arts, and the religious tendencies of Italy during the ascendancy of mediæval ideas are strongly set before us here. High above every other building in the town soars the straight brick tower of the Palazzo Pubblico, the house of the republic, the hearth of civil life within the State. It guards an irregular Gothic building in which the old government of Siena used to be assembled, but which has now for a long time been converted into prisons, courts of law, and show-rooms. Let us enter one chamber of the Palazzo—the Sala della Pace, where Ambrogio Lorenzetti, the greatest, perhaps, of Sienese painters, represented the evils of lawlessness and tyranny, and the benefits of peace and justice, in three noble allegories. They were executed early in the fourteenth century, in the age of allegories and symbolism, when poets and painters strove to personify in human shape all thoughts and sentiments. The first great fresco represents Peace—the peace of the Republic of Siena. Ambrogio has painted the twenty-four councillors who formed the government standing beneath the thrones of Concord, Justice, and Wisdom. From these controlling powers they stretch in a long double line to a seated figure, gigantic in size, and robed with the ensigns of baronial sovereignty. This figure

is the State and Majesty of Siena.\* Around him sit Peace, Fortitude, and Prudence, Temperance, Magnanimity, and Justice, inalienable assessors of a powerful and righteous lord. Faith, Hope, and Charity, the Christian virtues, float like angels in the air above. Armed horsemen guard his throne, and captives show that he has laid his enemy beneath his feet. Thus the mediæval artist expressed, by painting, his theory of government. The rulers of the State are subordinate to the State itself; they stand between the State and the great animating principles of wisdom, justice, and concord, incarnating the one, and receiving inspiration from the others. The pagan qualities of prudence, magnanimity, and courage give stability and greatness to good government, while the spirit of Christianity must harmonize and rule the whole. Arms, too, are needful to maintain by force what right and law demand, and victory in a just quarrel proclaims the power and vigor of the commonwealth. On another wall Ambrogio has depicted the prosperous city of Siena, girt by battlements and moat, with tower and barbican and drawbridge, to insure its peace.

\* It is probable that the firm Ghibelline sympathies of the Sienese people for the empire were allegorized in this figure; so that the fresco represented by form and color what Dante had expressed in his treatise "De Monarchia." Among the virtues who attend him, Peace distinguishes herself by rare and very remarkable beauty. She is dressed in white and crowned with olive; the folds of her drapery, clinging to the delicately modelled limbs beneath, irresistibly suggest a classic statue. So again does the monumental pose of her dignified, reclining, and yet languid figure. It seems not unreasonable to believe that Lorenzetti copied Peace from the antique Venus which belonged to the Sienese, and which in a fit of superstitious malice they subsequently destroyed and buried in Florentine soil.

Through the gates stream country people, bringing the produce of their farms into the town. The streets are crowded with men and women intent on business or pleasure; craftsmen at their trade, merchants with laden mules, a hawking-party, hunters scouring the plain, girls dancing, and children playing in the open square. A schoolmaster watching his class, together with the sculptured figures of Geometry, Astronomy, and Philosophy, remind us that education and science flourish under the dominion of well-balanced laws. The third fresco exhibits the reverse of this fair spectacle. Here Tyranny presides over a scene of anarchy and wrong. He is a hideous monster, compounded of all the bestial attributes which indicate force, treason, lechery, and fear. Avarice and Fraud and Cruelty and War and Fury sit around him. At his feet lies Justice, and above are the effigies of Nero, Caracalla, and like monsters of ill-regulated power. Not far from the castle of Tyranny we see the same town as in the other fresco; but its streets are filled with scenes of quarrel, theft, and bloodshed. Nor are these allegories merely fanciful. In the Middle Ages the same city might more than once during one lifetime present in the vivid colors of reality the two contrasted pictures.\*

Quitting the Palazzo, and threading narrow streets

\* Siena, of all Italian cities, was most subject to revolutions. Comines describes it as a city which “se gouverne plus follement que ville d’Italie.” Varchi calls it “un guazzabuglio ed una confusione di repubbliche piuttosto che bene ordinata e instituta repubblica.” See my *Age of the Despots*, Renaissance in Italy, part I., pp. 141, 554, for some account of the Sienese constitution, and of the feuds and reconciliations of the burghers.

paved with brick and overshadowed with huge empty palaces, we reach the highest of the three hills on which Siena stands, and see before us the Duomo. This church is the most purely Gothic of all Italian cathedrals designed by national architects. Together with that of Orvieto, it stands to show what the unassisted genius of the Italians could produce, when under the empire of mediæval Christianity and before the advent of the neopagan spirit. It is built wholly of marble, and overlaid, inside and out, with florid ornaments of exquisite beauty. There are no flying buttresses, no pinnacles, no deep and fretted doorways, such as form the charm of French and English architecture; but, instead of this, the lines of parti-colored marbles, the scrolls and wreaths of foliage, the mosaics and the frescos which meet the eye in every direction, satisfy our sense of variety, producing most agreeable combinations of blending hues and harmoniously connected forms. The chief fault which offends against our Northern taste is the predominance of horizontal lines, both in the construction of the façade, and also in the internal decoration. This single fact sufficiently proves that the Italians had never seized the true idea of Gothic or aspiring architecture. But, allowing for this original defect, we feel that the Cathedral of Siena combines solemnity and splendor to a degree almost unrivalled. Its dome is another point in which the instinct of Italian architects has led them to adhere to the genius of their ancestral art rather than to follow the principles of Gothic design. The dome is Etruscan and Roman, native to the soil, and only by a kind of violence adapted to the character of pointed architecture. Yet the builders of Siena have shown what a

glorious element of beauty might have been added to our Northern cathedrals had the idea of infinity which our ancestors expressed by long continuous lines, by complexities of interwoven aisles, and by multitudinous aspiring pinnacles, been carried out into vast spaces of aerial cupolas, completing and embracing and covering the whole like heaven. The Duomo, as it now stands, forms only part of a vast design. On entering we are amazed to hear that this church, which looks so large, from the beauty of its proportions, the intricacy of its ornaments, and the interlacing of its columns, is but the transept of the intended building lengthened a little, and surmounted by a cupola and campanile.\* Yet such is the fact. Soon after its commencement a plague swept over Italy, nearly depopulated Siena, and reduced the town to penury for want of men. The cathedral, which, had it been accomplished, would have surpassed all Gothic churches south of the Alps, remained a ruin. A fragment of the nave still stands, enabling us to judge of its extent. The eastern wall joins what was to have been the transept, measuring the mighty space which would have been enclosed by marble vaults and columns delicately wrought. The sculpture on the eastern door shows with what magnificence the Sienese designed to ornament this portion of their temple; while the southern façade rears itself aloft above the town, like those high arches which testify to the past splendor of Glastonbury Abbey; but

\* The present church was begun about 1229. In 1321 the burghers fancied it was too small for the fame and splendor of their city. So they decreed a new *ecclesia pulcra, magna, et magnifica*, for which the older but as yet unfinished building was to be the transept.

the sun streams through the broken windows, and the walls are encumbered with hovels and stables and the refuse of surrounding streets.

One most remarkable feature of the internal decoration is a line of heads of the Popes carried all round the church above the lower arches. Larger than life, white solemn faces, they lean, each from his separate niche, crowned with the triple tiara, and labelled with the name he bore. Their accumulated majesty brings the whole past history of the Church into the presence of its living members. A bishop walking up the nave of Siena must feel as a Roman felt among the waxen images of ancestors renowned in council or in war. Of course these portraits are imaginary for the most part; but the artists have contrived to vary their features and expression with great skill.

Not less peculiar to Siena is the pavement of the cathedral. It is inlaid with a kind of *tarsia* work in stone, setting forth a variety of pictures in simple but eminently effective mosaic. Some of these compositions are as old as the cathedral; others are the work of Beccafumi and his scholars. They represent, in the liberal spirit of mediæval Christianity, the history of the Church before the Incarnation. Hermes Trismegistus and the Sibyls meet us at the doorway. In the body of the Church we find the mighty deeds of the old Jewish heroes—of Moses and Samson and Joshua and Judith. Independently of the artistic beauty of the designs, of the skill with which men and horses are drawn in the most difficult attitudes, of the dignity of some single figures, and of the vigor and simplicity of the larger compositions, a special interest attaches to this pavement in connection with the twelfth canto

of the *Purgatorio*. Dante cannot have trodden these stones and meditated upon their sculptured histories. Yet when we read how he journeyed through the plain of Purgatory with eyes intent upon its storied floor, how "morti i morti, e i vivi parcan vivi," how he saw "Nimrod at the foot of his great work, confounded, gazing at the people who were proud with him," we are irresistibly led to think of the Divine Comedy. The strong and simple outlines of the pavement correspond to the few words of the poet. Bending over these pictures and trying to learn their lesson, with the thought of Dante in our mind, the tones of an organ, singularly sweet and mellow, fall upon our ears, and we remember how he heard *Te Deum* sung within the gateway of repentance.

Continuing our walk, we descend the hill on which the Duomo stands, and reach a valley lying between the ancient city of Siena and a western eminence crowned by the Church of San Domenico. In this depression there has existed from old time a kind of suburb or separate district of the poorer people known by the name of the Contrada d'Oca. To the Sienese it has especial interest, for here is the birthplace of St. Catherine, the very house in which she lived, her father's workshop, and the chapel which has been erected in commemoration of her saintly life. Over the doorway is written in letters of gold "Sposæ Christi Katherinæ domus." Inside they show the room she occupied, and the stone on which she placed her head to sleep: they keep her veil and staff and lantern and enamelled vinaigrette, the bag in which her alms were placed, the sackcloth that she wore beneath her dress, the crucifix from which she took the wounds of Christ.

It is impossible to conceive, even after the lapse of several centuries, that any of these relics are fictitious. Every particular of her life was remembered and recorded with scrupulous attention by devoted followers. Her fame was universal throughout Italy before her death; and the house from which she went forth to preach and heal the sick and comfort plague-stricken wretches whom kith and kin had left alone to die was known and well beloved by all her citizens. From the moment of her death it became, and has continued to be, the object of superstitious veneration to thousands. From the little *loggia* which runs along one portion of its exterior may be seen the campanile and the dome of the cathedral; on the other side rises the huge brick church of San Domenico, in which she spent the long ecstatic hours that won for her the title of Christ's spouse. In a chapel attached to the church she watched and prayed, fasting and wrestling with the fiends of a disordered fancy. There Christ appeared to her and gave her his own heart, there he administered to her the sacrament with his own hands, there she assumed the robe of poverty, and gave her Lord the silver cross and took from him the crown of thorns.

To some of us these legends may appear the flimsiest web of fiction; to others they may seem quite explicable by the laws of semi-morbid psychology; but to Catherine herself, her biographers, and her contemporaries, they were not so. The enthusiastic saint and reverent people believed firmly in these things; and after the lapse of five centuries her votaries still kiss the floor and steps on which she trod; still say, "This was the wall on which she leaned when Christ appeared; this was the corner where she clothed him,

naked and shivering like a beggar-boy; here he sustained her with angel's food."

St. Catherine was one of twenty-five children born in wedlock to Jacopo and Lapa Benincasa, citizens of Siena. Her father exercised the trade of dyer and fuller. In the year of her birth, 1347, Siena reached the climax of its power and splendor. It was then that the plague of Boccaccio began to rage, which swept off 80,000 citizens, and interrupted the building of the great Duomo. In the midst of so large a family, and during these troubled times, Catherine grew almost unnoticed; but it was not long before she manifested her peculiar disposition. At six years old she already saw visions and longed for a monastic life; about the same time she used to collect her childish companions together and preach to them. As she grew, her wishes became stronger; she refused the proposals which her parents made that she should marry, and so vexed them by her obstinacy that they imposed on her the most servile duties in their household. These she patiently fulfilled, pursuing at the same time her own vocation with unwearied ardor. She scarcely slept at all, and ate no food but vegetables and a little bread, scourged herself, wore sackcloth, and became emaciated, weak, and half delirious. At length the firmness of her character and the force of her hallucinations won the day. Her parents consented to her assuming the Dominican robe, and at the age of thirteen she entered the monastic life. From this moment till her death we see in her the ecstatic, the philanthropist, and the politician combined to a remarkable degree. For three whole years she never left her cell except to go to church, maintaining an almost un-

broken silence. Yet when she returned to the world, convinced at last of having won by prayer and pain the favor of her Lord, it was to preach to infuriated mobs, to toil among men dying of the plague, to execute diplomatic negotiations, to harangue the republic of Florence, to correspond with queens, and to interpose between kings and popes. In the midst of this varied and distracting career she continued to see visions and to fast and scourge herself. The domestic virtues and the personal wants and wishes of a woman were annihilated in her; she lived for the Church, for the poor, and for Christ, whom she imagined to be constantly supporting her. At length she died, worn out by inward conflicts, by the tension of religious ecstasy, by want of food and sleep, and by the excitement of political life. To follow her in her public career is not my purpose. It is well known how, by the power of her eloquence and the ardor of her piety, she succeeded as a mediator between Florence and her native city, and between Florence and the Pope; that she travelled to Avignon, and there induced Gregory XI. to put an end to the Babylonian captivity of the Church by returning to Rome; that she narrowly escaped political martyrdom during one of her embassies from Gregory to the Florentine republic; that she preached a crusade against the Turks; that her last days were clouded with sorrow for the schism which then rent the papacy; and that she aided by her dying words to keep Pope Urban on the papal throne. When we consider her private and spiritual life more narrowly, it may well move our amazement to think that the intricate politics of Central Italy, the counsels of licentious princes and ambitious popes, were in any measure guided and con-

trolled by such a woman. Alone, and aided by nothing but a reputation for sanctity, she dared to tell the greatest men in Europe of their faults; she wrote in words of well-assured command, and they, demoralized, worldly, sceptical, or indifferent as they might be, were yet so bound by superstition that they could not treat with scorn the voice of an enthusiastic girl.

Absolute disinterestedness, the belief in her own spiritual mission, natural genius, and that vast power which then belonged to all energetic members of the monastic orders, enabled her to play this part. She had no advantages to begin with. The daughter of a tradesman overwhelmed with an almost fabulously numerous progeny, Catherine grew up uneducated. When her genius had attained maturity, she could not even read or write. Her biographer asserts that she learned to do so by a miracle. Anyhow, writing became a most potent instrument in her hands; and we possess several volumes of her epistles, as well as a treatise of mystical theology. To conquer self-love as the root of all evil, and to live wholly for others, was the cardinal axiom of her morality. She pressed this principle to its most rigorous conclusions in practice; never resting day or night from some kind of service, and winning by her unselfish love the enthusiastic admiration of the people. In the same spirit of exalted self-annihilation, she longed for martyrdom, and courted death. There was not the smallest personal tie or after-thought of interest to restrain her in the course of action which she had marked out. Her personal influence seems to have been immense. When she began her career of public peacemaker and preacher in Siena, Raymond, her biographer, says that whole fami-

lies devoted to *vendetta* were reconciled, and that civil strifes were quelled by her letters and addresses. He had seen more than a thousand people flock to hear her speak; the confessionals crowded with penitents, smitten by the force of her appeals; and multitudes, unable to catch the words which fell from her lips, sustained and animated by the light of holiness which beamed from her inspired countenance.\* She was not beautiful, but her face so shone with love, and her eloquence was so pathetic in its tenderness, that none could hear or look on her without emotion. Her writings contain abundant proofs of this peculiar suavity. They are too sweet and unctuous in style to suit our modern taste. When dwelling on the mystic love of Christ, she cries, "O blood! O fire! O ineffable love!" When interceding before the Pope, she prays for "Pace, pace, pace, babbo mio dolce; pace, e non più guerra." Yet clear and simple thoughts, profound convictions, and stern moral teaching underlie her ecstatic exclamations. One prayer which she wrote, and which the people of Siena still use, expresses the prevailing spirit of her creed: 'O Spirito Santo, o Deità eterna Cristo Amore! vieni nel mio cuore; per la tua potenza trailo a te, mio Dio, e concedemi carità con timore. Liberami, o Amore ineffabile, da ogni mal pensiero; riscaldami ed infiammami del tuo dolcissimo amore, sicchè ogni pena mi sembri leggiera. Santo mio Padre e dolce mio Signore, ora aiutami in ogni mio ministero. Cristo Amore! Cristo Amore!' The

\* The part played in Italy by preachers of repentance and peace is among the most characteristic features of Italian history. On this subject see the Appendix to my *Age of the Despots*, Renaissance in Italy, part I.

reiteration of the word “love” is most significant. It was the key-note of her whole theology, the mainspring of her life. In no merely figurative sense did she regard herself as the spouse of Christ, but dwelt upon the bliss, beyond all mortal happiness, which she enjoyed in supersensual communion with her Lord. It is easy to understand how such ideas might be, and have been, corrupted, when impressed on natures no less susceptible, but weaker and less gifted than St. Catherine’s.

One incident related by Catherine in a letter to Raymond, her confessor and biographer, exhibits the peculiar character of her influence in the most striking light. Nicola Tuldo, a citizen of Perugia, had been condemned to death for treason in the flower of his age. So terribly did the man rebel against his sentence, that he cursed God, and refused the consolations of religion. Priests visited him in vain; his heart was shut and sealed by the despair of leaving life in all the vigor of its prime. Then Catherine came and spoke to him: “whence,” she says, “he received such comfort that he confessed, and made me promise, by the love of God, to stand at the block beside him on the day of his execution.” By a few words, by the tenderness of her manner, and by the charm which women have, she had already touched the heart no priest could soften, and no threat of death or judgment terrify into contrition. Nor was this strange. In our own days we have seen men open the secrets of their hearts to women, after repelling the advances of less touching sympathy. Youths, cold and cynical enough among their brethren, have stood subdued like little children before her who spoke to them of love

and faith and penitence and hope. The world has not lost its ladies of the race of St. Catherine, beautiful and pure and holy, who have suffered and sought peace with tears, and who have been appointed ministers of mercy for the worst and hardest of their fellow-men. Such saints possess an efficacy even in the imposition of their hands; many a devotee, like Tuldo, would more willingly greet death if his St. Catherine were by to smile and lay her hands upon his head, and cry, "Go forth, my servant, and fear not!" The chivalrous admiration for women mixes with religious awe to form the reverence which these saints inspire. Human and heavenly love, chaste and ecstatic, constitute the secret of their power. Catherine then subdued the spirit of Tuldo and led him to the altar, where he received the communion for the first time in his life. His only remaining fear was that he might not have strength to face death bravely. Therefore he prayed Catherine, "Stay with me, do not leave me; so it shall be well with me, and I shall die contented;" "and," says the saint, "he laid his head in the prison on my breast, and I said, 'Comfort thee, my brother, the block shall soon become thy marriage altar, the blood of Christ shall bathe thy sins away, and I will stand beside thee.'" When the hour came, she went and waited for him by the scaffold, meditating on Madonna and Catherine the saint of Alexandria. She laid her own neck on the block, and tried to picture to herself the pains and ecstasies of martyrdom. In her deep thought, time and place became annihilated; she forgot the eager crowd, and only prayed for Tuldo's soul and for herself. At length he came, walking "like a gentle lamb," and Catherine

received him with the salutation of "sweet brother." She placed his head upon the block, and laid her hands upon him, and told him of the Lamb of God. The last words he uttered were the names of Jesus and of Catherine. Then the axe fell, and Catherine beheld his soul borne by angels into the regions of eternal love. When she recovered from her trance, she held his head within her hands; her dress was saturated with his blood, which she could scarcely bear to wash away, so deeply did she triumph in the death of him whom she had saved. The words of St. Catherine herself deserve to be read. The simplicity, freedom from self-consciousness, and fervent faith in the reality of all she did and said and saw, which they exhibit, convince us of her entire sincerity.

The supernatural element in the life of St. Catherine may be explained partly by the mythologizing adoration of the people ready to find a miracle in every act of her they worshipped; partly by her own temperament and modes of life, which inclined her to ecstasy and fostered the faculty of seeing visions; partly by a pious misconception of the words of Christ and Bible phraseology.

To the first kind belong the wonders which are related of her early years, the story of the candle which burned her veil without injuring her person, and the miracles performed by her body after death. Many childish incidents were treasured up which, had her life proved different, would have been forgotten or have found their proper place among the catalogue of common things. Thus, on one occasion, after hearing of the hermits of the Thebaïd, she took it into

her head to retire into the wilderness, and chose for her dwelling one of the caverns in the sandstone rock which abound in Siena near the quarter where her father lived. We merely see in this event a sign of her monastic disposition and a more than usual aptitude for realizing the ideas presented to her mind. But the old biographers relate how one celestial vision urged the childish hermit to forsake the world and another bade her return to the duties of her home.

To the second kind we may refer the frequent communings with Christ and with the fathers of the Church, together with the other visions to which she frequently laid claim; nor must we omit the stigmata which she believed she had received from Christ. Catherine was constitutionally inclined to hallucinations. At the age of six, before it was probable that a child should have laid claim to spiritual gifts which she did not possess, she burst into loud weeping because her little brother rudely distracted her attention from the brilliant forms of saints and angels which she traced among the clouds. Almost all children of a vivid imagination are apt to transfer the objects of their fancy to the world without them. Goethe walked for hours in his enchanted gardens as a boy, and Alfieri tells us how he saw a company of angels in the choristers at Asti. Nor did St. Catherine omit any means of cultivating this faculty, and of preventing her splendid visions from fading away, as they almost always do, beneath the discipline of intellectual education and among the distractions of daily life. Believing simply in their heavenly origin, and receiving no secular training whatsoever, she walked surrounded by a spiritual world, environed, as her legend

says, by angels. Her habits were calculated to foster this disposition. It is related that she took but little sleep, scarcely more than two hours at night, and that, too, on the bare ground; she ate nothing but vegetables and the sacred wafer of the host, entirely abjuring the use of wine and meat. This diet, combined with frequent fasts and severe ascetic discipline, depressed her physical forces, and her nervous system was thrown into a state of the highest exaltation. Thoughts became things, and ideas were projected from her vivid fancy upon the empty air around her. It was, therefore, no wonder that, after spending long hours in vigils and meditating always on the thought of Christ, she should have seemed to take the sacrament from his hands, to pace the chapel in communion with him, to meet him in the form of priest and beggar, to hear him speaking to her as a friend. Once, when the anguish of sin had plagued her with disturbing dreams, Christ came and gave her his own heart in exchange for hers. When lost in admiration before the cross at Pisa, she saw his five wounds stream with blood—five crimson rays smote her, passed into her soul, and left their marks upon her hands and feet and side. The light of Christ's glory shone round about her; she partook of his martyrdom and, awaking from her trance, she cried to Raymond “Behold! I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus!”

This miracle had happened to St. Francis. It was regarded as the sign of fellowship with Christ—of worthiness to drink his cup and to be baptized with his baptism. We find the same idea, at least, in the old Latin hymns:

Fac me plagis vulnerari—  
 Cruce hâc inebriari—  
 Fac ut portem Christi mortem,  
 Passionis fac consortem,  
 Et plagas recolere.

These are words from the *Stabat Mater*. Nor did St. Francis and St. Catherine do more than carry into the vividness of actual hallucination what had been the poetic rapture of many less ecstatic but not less ardent souls. They desired to be *literally* “crucified with Christ;” they were not satisfied with metaphor or sentiment, and it seemed to them that their Lord had really vouchsafed to them the yearning of their heart. We need not here raise the question whether the stigmata had ever been actually self-inflicted by delirious saint or hermit; it was not pretended that the wounds of St. Catherine were visible during her lifetime. After her death the faithful thought that they had seen them on her corpse, and they actually appeared in the relics of her hands and feet. The pious fraud, if fraud there must have been, should be ascribed, not to the saint herself, but to devotees and relic-mongers.\* The order of St. Dominic would not be behind that of St. Francis. If the latter boasted of their stigmata, the former would be ready to perforate the hand or foot of their dead saint. Thus the ecstasies of genius or devotion are brought to earth and rendered vulgar by mistaken piety and the rivalry

\* It is not impossible that the stigmata may have been naturally produced in the person of St. Francis or St. Catherine. There are cases on record in which grave nervous disturbances have resulted in such modifications of the flesh as may have left the traces of wounds in scars and blisters.

of sects. The people put the most material construction on all tropes and metaphors. Above the door of St. Catherine's chapel at Siena, for example, it is written:

Hæc tenet ara caput Catharinæ; corda requiris?  
Hæc imo Christus pectore clausa tenet.

The frequent conversations which she held with St. Dominic and other patrons of the Church, and her supernatural marriage, must be referred to the same category. Strong faith and constant familiarity with one order of ideas, joined with a creative power of fancy and fostered by physical debility, produced these miraculous colloquies. Early in her career, her injured constitution, resenting the violence with which it had been forced to serve the ardors of her piety, troubled her with foul phantoms, haunting images of sin, and seductive whisperings, which clearly revealed a morbid condition of the nervous system. She was on the verge of insanity. The reality of her inspiration and her genius are proved by the force with which her human sympathies and moral dignity and intellectual vigor triumphed over these diseased hallucinations of the cloister and converted them into the instruments for effecting patriotic and philanthropic designs. There was nothing savoring of mean pretension or imposture in her claim to supernatural enlightenment. Whatever we may think of the wisdom of her public policy with regard to the Crusades and to the papal sovereignty, it is impossible to deny that a holy and high object possessed her from the earliest to the latest of her life; that she lived for ideas greater than self-aggrandizement or the saving of her soul—for the greatest, perhaps, which her age presented to an earnest Catholic.

The abuses to which the indulgence of temperaments like that of St. Catherine must in many cases have given rise are obvious. Hysterical women and half-witted men, without possessing her abilities and understanding her objects, beheld unmeaning visions and dreamed childish dreams. Others won the reputation of sanctity by obstinate neglect of all the duties of life and of all the decencies of personal cleanliness. Every little town in Italy could show its saints like the Santa Fina of whom San Gemignano boasts—a girl who lay for seven years on a back-board till her mortified flesh clung to the wood; or the San Bartolo, who, for hideous leprosy, received the title of the Job of Tuscany. Children were encouraged in blasphemous pretensions to the special power of Heaven, and the nerves of weak women were shaken by revelations in which they only half believed. We have ample evidence to prove how the trade of miracles is still carried on, and how in the France of our days, when intellectual vigor has been separated from old forms of faith, such vision-mongering undermines morality, encourages ignorance, and saps the force of individuals. But St. Catherine must not be confounded with those sickly shams and make-believes. Her enthusiasms were real; they were proper to her age; they inspired her with unrivalled self-devotion and unwearied energy; they connected her with the political and social movements of her country.

Many of the supernatural events in St. Catherine's life were founded on a too literal acceptation of Biblical metaphors. The Canticles, perhaps, inspired her with the belief in a mystical marriage. An enigmatical sentence of St. Paul's suggested the stigmata. When

the saint bestowed her garment upon Christ in the form of a beggar and gave him the silver cross of her rosary, she was but realizing his own words: "Inasmuch as ye shall do it unto the least of these little ones, ye shall do it unto me." Charity, according to her conception, consisted in giving to Christ. He had first taught this duty; he would make it the test of all duty at the last day. Catherine was charitable for the love of Christ. She thought less of the beggar than of her Lord. How could she do otherwise than see the aureole about his forehead and hear the voice of him who had declared, "Behold, I am with you, even to the end of the world." Those were times of childlike simplicity, when the eye of love was still unclouded, when men could see beyond the phantoms of this world, and, stripping off the accidents of matter, gaze upon the spiritual and eternal truths that lie beneath. Heaven lay around them in that infancy of faith; nor did they greatly differ from the saints and founders of the Church—from Paul, who saw the vision of the Lord; or Magdalen, who cried, "He is risen!" An age accustomed to veil thought in symbols easily reversed the process and discerned essential qualities beneath the common or indifferent objects of the outer world. It was, therefore, Christ whom St. Christopher carried in the shape of a child; Christ whom Fra Angelico's Dominicans received in pilgrim's garb at their convent gate; Christ with whom, under a leper's loathsome form, the flower of Spanish chivalry was said to have shared his couch.

In all her miracles it will be noticed that St. Catherine showed no originality. Her namesake of Alexandria had already been proclaimed the spouse

of Christ. St. Francis had already received the stigmata; her other visions were such as had been granted to all fervent mystics; they were the growth of current religious ideas and unbounded faith. It is not as an innovator in religious ecstasy, or as the creator of a new kind of spiritual poetry, that we admire St. Catherine. Her inner life was simply the foundation of her character; her visions were a source of strength to her in times of trial, or the expression of a more than usually exalted mood; but the means by which she moved the hearts of men belonged to that which she possessed in common with all leaders of mankind—enthusiasm, eloquence, the charm of a gracious nature, and the will to do what she designed. She founded no religious order, like St. Francis or St. Dominic, her predecessors, or Loyola, her successor. Her work was a woman's work—to make peace, to succor the afflicted, to strengthen the Church, to purify the hearts of those around her, not to rule or organize. When she died she left behind her a memory of love more than of power, the fragrance of an unselfish and gentle life, the echo of sweet and earnest words. Her place is in the heart of the humble; children belong to her sisterhood, and the poor crowd her shrine on festivals.

Catherine died at Rome, on the 29th of April, 1380, in her thirty-third year, surrounded by the most faithful of her friends and followers; but it was not until 1461 that she received the last honor of canonization from the hands of Pius II. (Æneas Sylvius), her countryman. Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini was, perhaps, the most remarkable man that Siena has produced.

Like St. Catherine, he was one of a large family; twenty of his brothers and sisters perished in a plague. The licentiousness of his early life, the astuteness of his intellect, and the worldliness of his aims contrast with the singularly disinterested character of the saint on whom he conferred the highest honors of the Church. But he accomplished by diplomacy and skill what Catherine had begun. If she was instrumental in restoring the Popes to Rome, he ended the schism which had clouded her last days. She had preached a crusade; he lived to assemble the armies of Christendom against the Turks, and died at Ancona, while it was still uncertain whether the authority and enthusiasm of a pope could steady the wavering counsels and vacillating wills of kings and princes. The Middle Ages were still vital in St. Catherine; Pius II. belonged by taste and genius to the new period of Renaissance. The hundreds of the poorer Sienese who kneel before St. Catherine's shrine prove that her memory is still alive in the hearts of her fellow-citizens; while the gorgeous library of the cathedral, painted by the hand of Pinturicchio, the sumptuous palace and the Loggia del Papa, designed by Bernardo Rossellino and Antonio Federighi, record the pride and splendor of the greatest of the Piccolomini. But, honorable as it was for Pius to fill so high a place in the annals of his city; to have left it as a poor adventurer; to return to it; first as bishop, then as pope; to have a chamber in its mother church adorned with the pictured history of his achievements for a monument and a triumph of Renaissance architecture dedicated to his family (*gentilibus suis*), yet we cannot but feel that the better part

remains with St. Catherine, whose prayer is still whispered by children on their mother's knee, and whose relics are kissed daily by the simple and devout.

Some of the chief Italian painters have represented the incidents of St. Catherine's life and of her mystical experience. All the pathos and beauty which we admire in Sodoma's St. Sebastian at Florence are surpassed by his fresco of St. Catherine receiving the stigmata. This is one of several subjects painted by him on the walls of her chapel in San Domenico. The tender unction, the sweetness, the languor, and the grace which he commanded with such admirable mastery are all combined in the figure of the saint falling exhausted into the arms of her attendant nuns. Soft undulating lines rule the composition; yet dignity of attitude and feature prevails over mere loveliness. Another of Siena's greatest masters—Beccafumi—has treated the same subject with less pictorial skill and dramatic effect, but with an earnestness and simplicity that are very touching. Colorists always liked to introduce the sweeping lines of her white robes into their compositions. Fra Bartolomeo, who showed consummate art by tempering the masses of white drapery with mellow tones of brown or amber, painted one splendid picture of the marriage of St. Catherine, and another in which he represents her prostrate in adoration before the mystery of the Trinity. His gentle and devout soul sympathized with the spirit of the saint. The fervor of her devotion belonged to him more truly than the leonine power which he unsuccessfully attempted to express in his large figure of St. Mark. Other artists have painted the two Catherines together—the princess of Alexandria, crowned and robed in

purple, bearing her palm of martyrdom, beside the nun of Siena, holding in her hand the lantern with which she went about by night among the sick. Ambrogio Borgognone makes them stand one on each side of Madonna's throne, while the infant Christ upon her lap extends his hands to both in token of their marriage.

The traditional type of countenance which may be traced in all these pictures is not without a real foundation. Not only does there exist at Siena, in the Church of San Domenico, a contemporary portrait of St. Catherine, but her head also, which was embalmed immediately after death, is still preserved. The skin of the face is fair and white, like parchment, and the features have more the air of sleep than death. We find in them the breadth and squareness of general outline, and the long, even eyebrows which give peculiar calm to the expression of her pictures. This relic is shown publicly once a year on the 6th of May. That is the Festa of the Saint, when a procession of priests and acolytes, and pious people holding tapers, and little girls dressed out in white, carry a splendid silver image of their patroness about the city. Banners and crosses and censers go in front; then follows the shrine beneath a canopy; roses and leaves of box are scattered on the path. The whole Contrada d'Oca is decked out with such finery as the people can muster — red cloths hung from the windows, branches and garlands strewn about the door-steps, with brackets for torches on the walls, and altars erected in the middle of the street. Troops of country-folk and towns-people and priests go in and out to visit the cell of St. Catherine. The upper and the lower chapel, built

upon its site, and the hall of the *confraternità*, blaze with lighted tapers. The faithful, full of wonder, kneel or stand about the “santi luoghi,” marvelling at the relics and repeating to one another the miracles of the saint. The same bustle pervades the Church of San Domenico. Masses are being said at one or other chapel all the morning, while women in their flapping Tuscan hats crowd round the silver image of St. Catherine and say their prayers with a continual under-current of responses to the nasal voice of priest or choir. Others gain entrance to the chapel of the saint and kneel before her altar. There, in the blaze of sunlight and of tapers, far away behind the gloss and gilding of a tawdry shrine, is seen the pale, white face which spoke and suffered so much years ago. The contrast of its rigid stillness and half-concealed corruption with the noise and life and light outside is very touching. Even so, the remnant of a dead idea still stirs the souls of thousands, and many ages may roll by before time and oblivion assert their inevitable sway.

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## PERUGIA.

PERUGIA is the empress of hill-set Italian cities. Southward from her high-built battlements and church-towers the eye can sweep a circuit of the Apennines unrivalled in its width. From cloudlike Radicofani, above Siena in the west, to snow-capped Monte Catria, beneath whose summit Dante spent those saddest months of solitude in 1313, the mountains curve continuously in lines of austere dignity and tempered sweetness. Assisi, Spoleto, Todi, Trevi, crown lesser heights within the range of vision. Here and there the glimpse of distant rivers lights a silver spark upon the plain. Those hills conceal Lake Thrasymene; and there lies Orvieto, and Ancona there: while at our feet the Umbrian champaign, breaking away into the valley of the Tiber, spreads in all the largeness of majestically converging mountain-slopes. This is a landscape which can never lose its charm. Whether it be purple golden summer, or winter with sad tints of russet woods and faintly rosy snows, or spring attired in tenderest green of new-fledged trees and budding flowers, the air is always pure and light and finely tempered here. City gates, sombre as their own antiquity, frame vistas of the laughing fields. Terraces, flanked on either side by jutting masonry, cut clear vignettes of olive-hoary slopes, with cypress-shadowed farms in hollows of the hills. Each coign or point of vantage carries a

bastion or tower of Etruscan, Roman, mediæval, architecture, tracing the limits of the town upon its mountain plateau. Everywhere art and nature lie side by side in amity beneath a sky so pure and delicate that from its limpid depth the spirit seems to drink new life. What air-tints of lilac, orange, and pale amethyst are shed upon those vast ethereal hills and undulating plains! What wandering cloud-shadows sail across this sea of olives and of vines, with here and there a fleece of vapor or a column of blue smoke from charcoal-burners on the mountain flank! To southward, far away beyond those hills, is felt the presence of eternal Rome, not seen, but clearly indicated by the hurrying of a hundred streams that swell the Tiber.

In the neighborhood of the town itself there is plenty to attract the student of antiquities or art or history. He may trace the walls of the Etruscan city, and explore the vaults where the dust of the Volumnii lies coffered in sarcophagi and urns. Mild faces of grave deities lean from the living tufa above those narrow alcoves, where the chisel-marks are still fresh, and where the vigilant lamps still hang suspended from the roof by leaden chains. Or, in the museum, he may read on bass-reliefs and vases how gloomy and morose were the superstitions of those obscure forerunners of majestic Rome. The piazza offers one of the most perfect Gothic façades, in its Palazzo Pubblico, to be found in Italy. The flight of marble steps is guarded from above by the bronze griffin of Perugia and the Baglioni, with the bronze lion of the Guelf faction, to which the town was ever faithful. Upon their marble brackets they ramp in all the lean ferocity of feudal heraldry, and from their claws hang

down the chains wrested in old warfare from some barricaded gateway of Siena. Below is the fountain, on the many-sided curves of which Giovanni Pisano sculptured, in quaint statuettes and bass-reliefs, all the learning of the Middle Ages, from the Bible history down to fables of *Æsop* and allegories of the several months. Facing the same piazza is the Sala del Cambio, a mediæval Bourse, with its tribunal for the settlement of mercantile disputes, and its exquisite carved wood-work and frescos, the masterpiece of Perugino's school. Hard by is the university, once crowded with native and foreign students, where the eloquence of Greek Demetrius in the first dawn of the Renaissance withdrew the gallants of Perugia—those slim youths with shocks of nut-brown hair beneath their tiny red caps, whose comely legs, encased in tight-fitting hose of two different colors, look so strange to modern eyes upon the canvas of Signorelli—from their dice and wine-cups, and amours and daggers, to grave studies in the lore of Greece and Rome.

This piazza, the scene of all the bloodiest tragedies in Perugian annals, is closed at the north end by the cathedral, with the open pulpit in its wall from which St. Bernardino of Siena preached peace in vain. The citizens wept to hear his words: a bonfire of vanities was lighted on the flags beside Pisano's fountain: foe kissed foe: and the same cowl of St. Francis was set in token of repentance on heads that long had schemed destruction, each for each. But a few days passed, and the penitents returned to cut each other's throat. Often and often have those steps of the Duomo run with blood of Baglioni, Oddi, Arcipreti, and La Staffa. Once the whole church had to be washed with wine

and blessed anew before the rites of Christianity could be resumed in its desecrated aisles. It was here that within the space of two days, in 1500, the catafalque was raised for the murdered Astorre, and for his traitorous cousin Grifonetto Baglioni. Here, too, if more ancient tradition does not err, were stretched the corpses of twenty-seven members of the same great house at the end of one of their grim combats.

No Italian city illustrates more forcibly than Perugia the violent contrasts of the earlier Renaissance. This is, perhaps, its most essential characteristic—that which constitutes its chief æsthetic interest. To many travellers the name of Perugia suggests at once the painter who, more than any other, gave expression to devout emotions in consummate works of pietistic art. They remember how Raphael, when a boy, with Pinturicchio, Lo Spagna, and Adone Doni, in the workshop of Pietro Perugino, learned the secret of that style to which he gave sublimity and freedom in his *Madonnas di San Sisto, di Foligno, and del Cardellino*. But the students of mediæval history in detail know Perugia far better as the lion's lair of one of the most ferocious broods of heroic ruffians Italy can boast. To them the name of Perugia suggest at once the great house of the Baglioni, who drenched Umbria with blood, and gave the broad fields of Assisi to the wolf, and who through six successive generations bred captains for the armies of Venice, Florence, Naples, and the Church.\* That

\* Most of the references in this essay are made to the Perugian chronicles of Graziani, Matarazzo, Bontempi, and Frolliere, in the *Archivio Storico Italiano*, vol. xvi. parts 1 and 2. Ariodante Fabretti's *Biografie dei Capitani Venturieri dell' Umbria* supply some details.

the trade of Perugino in religious pictures should have been carried on in the city which shared the factions of the Baglioni—that Raphael should have been painting Pietas while Astorre and Simonetto were being murdered by the beautiful young Grifonetto—is a paradox of the purest water in the history of civilization.

The art of Perugino implied a large number of devout and wealthy patrons, a public not only capable of comprehending him, but also eager to restrict his great powers within the limits of purely devotional delineation. The feuds and passions of the Baglioni, on the other hand, implied a society in which egregious crimes only needed success to be accounted glorious, where force, cruelty, and cynical craft reigned supreme, and where the animal instincts attained gigantic proportions in the persons of splendid young athletic despots. Even the names of these Baglioni—Astorre, Lavinia, Zenobia, Atalanta, Troilo, Ercole, Annibale, Ascanio, Penelope, Orazio, and so forth—clash with the sweet mild forms of Perugino, whose very executioners are candidates for Paradise, and kill their martyrs with compunction.

In Italy of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries such contradictions subsisted in the same place and under the conditions of a common culture, because there was no limit to the development of personality. Character was far more absolute then than now. The force of the modern world, working in the men of those times like powerful wine, as yet displayed itself only as a spirit of freedom and expansion and revolt. The strait laces of mediæval Christianity were loosened. The coercive action of public opinion had not yet made itself dominant. That was an age of adolescence,

in which men were and dared to be *themselves* for good or evil. Hypocrisy, except for some solid, well-defined, selfish purpose, was unknown: the deference to established canons of decorum which constitutes more than half of our so-called morality, would have been scarcely intelligible to an Italian. The outlines of individuality were therefore strongly accentuated. Life itself was dramatic in its incidents and motives, its catastrophes and contrasts. These conditions, eminently favorable to the growth of arts and the pursuit of science, were no less conducive to the hypertrophy of passions, and to the full development of ferocious and inhuman personalities. Every man did what seemed good in his own eyes. Far less restrained than we are by the verdict of his neighbors, but bound by faith to more blind and fiercer superstitions, he displayed the contradictions of his character in picturesque chiaroscuro. What he could was the limit set on what he would. Therefore, considering the infinite varieties of human temperaments, it was not merely possible, but natural, for Pietro Perugino and Gianpaolo Baglioni to be inhabitants at the same time of the self-same city, and for the pious Atalanta to mourn the bloodshed and the treason of her Achillean son, the young and terrible Grifone. Here, in a word, in Perugia, beneath the fierce blaze of the Renaissance, were brought into splendid contrast both the martial violence and the religious sentiment of mediævalism, raised for a moment to the elevation of fine art.

Some of Perugino's qualities can be studied better in Perugia than elsewhere. Of his purely religious pictures—altar-pieces of Madonna and Saints, martyrdoms of St. Sebastian, Crucifixions, Ascensions, An-

nunciations, and Depositions from the Cross—fine specimens are exhibited in nearly all the galleries of Europe. A large number of his works and of those of his scholars may be seen assembled in the Pinacoteca of Perugia. Yet the student of his pietistic style finds little here of novelty to notice. It is in the Sala del Cambio that we gain a really new conception of his faculty. Upon the decoration of that little hall he concentrated all his powers of invention. The frescos of the Transfiguration and the Nativity, which face the great door, are the triumphs of his devotional manner. On other panels of the chamber he has portrayed the philosophers of Greece and Rome, the kings and generals of antiquity, the prophets and the sibyls who announced Chirst's advent. The roof is covered with arabesques of delicate design and dainty execution—labyrinths of fanciful improvisation, in which flowers and foliage and human forms are woven into an harmonious framework for the medallions of the seven planets. The woodwork with which the hall is lined below the frescos shows to what a point of perfection the art of *intarsia* had been carried in his school. All these decorative masterpieces are the product of one ingenuous style. Uninfluenced by the Roman frescos imitated by Raphael in his Loggie of the Vatican, they breathe the spirit of the earlier Renaissance, which created for itself free forms of grace and loveliness without a pattern, divining by its innate sense of beauty what the classic artists had achieved. Take for an example the medallion of the planet Jupiter. The king of gods and men, hoary-headed and mild-eyed, is seated in his chariot drawn by eagles: before him kneels Ganymede, a fair-haired

exquisite, slim page, with floating mantle and ribbons fluttering round his tight hose and jerkin. Such were the cup-bearers of Galeazzo Sforza and Gianpaolo Baglioni. Then compare this fresco with the Jupiter in mosaic upon the cupola of the Chigi chapel in S. Maria del Popolo at Rome. A new age of experience had passed over Raphael between his execution of Perugino's design in the one and his conception of the other. He had seen the marbles of the Vatican, and had heard of Plato in the interval: the simple graces of the earlier Renaissance were no longer enough for him; but he must realize the thought of classic myths in his new manner. In the same way we may compare this Transfiguration with Raphael's last picture, these sibyls with those of S. Maria della Pace, these sages with the School of Athens, these warriors with the Battle of Maxentius. What is characteristic of the full-grown Raphael is his universal comprehension, his royal faculty for representing past and present, near and distant, things the most diverse, by forms ideal and yet distinctive. Each phase of the world's history and of human activity receives from him appropriate and elevated expression. What is characteristic of the frescos in the Sala del Cambio, and indeed of the whole manner of Perugino, is that all subjects, sacred or secular, allegorical or real, are conceived in the same spirit of restrained and well-bred piety. There is no attempt at historical propriety or dramatic realism. Grave, ascetic, melancholy faces of saints are put on bodies of kings, generals, sages, sibyls, and deities alike. The same ribbons and studied draperies clothe and connect all. The same conventional attitudes of meditative gracefulness are

repeated in each group. Yet the whole effect, if somewhat feeble and insipid, is harmonious and thoughtful. We see that each part has proceeded from the same mind, in the same mood, and that the master's mind was no common one, the mood itself was noble. Good taste is everywhere apparent: the work throughout is a masterpiece of refined fancy.

To Perugino the representative imagination was of less importance than a certain delicate and adequately ideal mode of feeling and conceiving. The consequent charm of his style is that everything is thought out and rendered visible in one decorous key. The worst that can be said of it is that its suavity inclines to mawkishness, and that its quietism borders upon sleepiness. We find it difficult not to accuse him of affectation. At the same time we are forced to allow that what he did, and what he refrained from doing, was determined by a purpose. A fresco of the Adoration of the Shepherds, and a picture of St. Sebastian in the Pinacoteca, where the archer on the right hand is drawn in a natural attitude with force and truth, show well enough what Perugino could do when he chose.

The best way of explaining his conventionality, in which the supreme power of a master is always verging on the facile trick of a mannerist, is to suppose that the people of Perugia and the Umbrian highlands imposed on him this narrow mode of treatment. We may presume that he was always receiving orders for pictures to be executed in his well-known manner. Celestial insipidity in art was the fashion in that Umbria which the Baglioni and the popes laid waste from time to time with fire and sword.\*

\* It will not be forgotten by students of Italian history that

Therefore the painter, who had made his reputation by placing devout young faces upon twisted necks, with a background of limpid twilight and calm landscape, was forced by the fervor of his patrons, and his own desire for money, to perpetuate pious prettinesses long after he had ceased to feel them. It is just this widespread popularity of a master unrivalled in one line of devotional sentimentalism which makes the contrast between Perugino and the Baglioni family so striking.

The Baglioni first came into notice during the wars they carried on with the Oddi of Perugia in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.\* This was one of those duels to the death, like that of the Visconti with the Torrensi of Milan, on which the fate of so many Italian cities in the Middle Ages hung. The nobles fought; the townsfolk assisted like a Greek chorus,

Umbria was the cradle of the *Battuti*, or Flagellants, who over-spread Italy in the fourteenth century, and to whose devotion were due the *Landi*, or popular hymns of the religious confraternities, which in course of time produced the *Sacre Rappresentazioni* of fifteenth century Florentine literature. Umbria, and especially Perugia and Assisi, seem to have been inventive in piety between 1200 and 1400.

\* The Baglioni persecuted their rivals with persistent fury to the very last. Matarazzo tells how Morgante Baglioni gave a death-wound to his nephew, the young Carlo de li Oddi, in 1501: "Dielli una ferita nella formosa faccia: el quale era in aspetto vago e bello giovane d'anni 23 o 24, al quale uscivano le bionde tresse sotto la bella armadura." The same night his kinsman Pompeo was murdered in prison with this last lament upon his lips: "O infelice casa degli Oddi, quale aveste tanta fama di conduttieri, capitanie, cavaliere, speron d'oro, protonotarie, e abbate; et in uno solo tempo aveste homine quarantadue; e oggie, per me quale son ultimo, se asconde el nome de la magnifica e famosa casa degli Oddi, che mai al mondo non sarà piu nominata" (p. 175).

sharing the passions of the actors, but contributing little to the catastrophe. The piazza was the theatre on which the tragedy was played. In this contest the Baglioni proved the stronger, and began to sway the State of Perugia after the irregular fashion of Italian despots. They had no legal right over the city, no hereditary magistracy, no title of princely authority.\* The Church was reckoned the supreme administrator of the Perugian commonwealth. But in reality no man could set foot on the Umbrian plain without permission from the Baglioni. They elected the officers of state. The lives and goods of the citizens were at their discretion. When a papal legate showed his face, they made the town too hot to hold him. One of Innocent VIII.'s nephews had been murdered by them.\*\* Another cardinal had shut himself up in a box, and sneaked on mule-back like a bale of merchandise through the gates to escape their fury. It was in vain that from time to time the people rose against them, massacring Pandolfo Baglioni on the public square in 1393, and joining with Ridolfo and Braccio of the dominant house to assassinate another Pandolfo with his son Niccolo in 1460. The more they were cut down, the more they flourished. The wealth they derived from their lordships in the duchy of Spoleto and the Umbrian hill-cities, and the treasures they ac-

\* The Baglioni were lords of Spello, Bettona, Montalera, and other Umbrian burghs, but never of Perugia. Perugia had a civic constitution similar to that of Florence and other Guelph towns under the protection of the Holy See. The power of the eminent house was based only on wealth and prestige.

\*\* See Matarazzo, p. 38. It is here that he relates the covert threat addressed by Guido Baglioni to Alexander VI., who was seeking to inveigle him into his clutches.

cumulated in the service of the Italian republics, made them omnipotent in their native town. There they built tall houses on the site which Paul III. chose afterwards for his *castello*, and which is now an open place above the Porta San Carlo. From the balconies and turrets of these palaces, swarming with their *bravi*, they surveyed the splendid land that felt their force—a land which, even in midsummer, from sunrise to sunset keeps the light of day upon its up-turned face. And from this eyrie they issued forth to prey upon the plain, or to take their lust of love or blood within the city streets. The Baglioni spent but short time in the amusements of peace. From father to son they were warriors, and we have records of few Italian houses, except, perhaps, the Malatesti of Rimini, who equalled them in hardihood and fierceness. Especially were they noted for the remorseless *vendette* which they carried on among themselves, cousin tracking cousin to death with the ferocity and craft of sleuth-hounds. Had they restrained these fratricidal passions, they might, perhaps, by following some common policy, like that of the Medici in Florence or the Bentivogli in Bologna, have successfully resisted the papal authority and secured dynastic sovereignty.

It is not until 1495 that the history of the Baglioni becomes dramatic, possibly because till then they lacked the pen of Matarazzo.\* But from this year forward

\* His chronicle is a masterpiece of naive, unstudied narrative. Few documents are so important for the student of the sixteenth century in Italy. Whether it be really the work of Matarazzo or Maturanzio, the distinguished humanist, is more than doubtful. The writer seems to me as yet unspoiled by classic studies and the pedantries of imitation.

to their final extinction, every detail of their doings has a picturesque and awful interest. Domestic furies, like the revel described by Cassandra above the palace of Mycenæ, seem to take possession of the fated house; and the doom which has fallen on them is worked out with pitiless exactitude to the last generation. In 1495 the heads of the Casa Baglioni were two brothers, Guido and Ridolfo, who had a numerous progeny of heroic sons. From Guido sprang Astorre, Adriano—called for his great strength *Morgante*\*—Gismondo, Marcantonio, and Gentile. Ridolfo owned Troilo, Gianpaolo, and Simonetto. The first glimpse we get of these young athletes in Matarazzo's chronicle is on the occasion of a sudden assault upon Perugia made by the Oddi and the exiles of their faction in September, 1495. The foes of the Baglioni entered the gates and began breaking the iron chains, *serragli*, which barred the streets against advancing cavalry. None of the noble house were on the alert except young Simonetto, a lad of eighteen, fierce and cruel, who had not yet begun to shave his chin.\*\* In spite of all dissuasion, he rushed forth alone, bareheaded, in his shirt, with a sword in his right hand and a buckler on his arm, and fought against a squadron. There at the barrier of the piazza he kept his foes at bay, smiting men-at-arms to the ground with the sweep

\* This name, it may be incidentally mentioned, proves the wide-spread popularity of Pulci's poem, the *Morgante Maggiore*.

\*\* “Era costui al presente di anne 18019; ancora non se radeva barba; e mostrava tanta forza e tanto ardire, e era tanto adatto nel fatto d'arme, che era gran maraveglia; e iostrava cum tanta gentilezza e gagliardia, che homo del mondo non l'aria mai crespo; et aria dato con la punta de la lancia in nel fondo d'uno bicchiere da la mattina a la sera,” etc. (p. 50).

of his tremendous sword, and receiving on his gentle body twenty-two cruel wounds. While thus at fearful odds, the noble Astorre mounted his charger and joined him. Upon his helmet flashed the falcon of the Baglioni with the dragon's tail that swept behind. Bidding Simonetto tend his wounds, he in his turn held the square.

Listen to Matarazzo's description of the scene; it is as good as any piece of the *Morte d'Arthur*: "According to the report of one who told me what he had seen with his own eyes, never did anvil take so many blows as he upon his person and his steed; and they all kept striking at his lordship in such crowds that the one prevented the other. And so many lances, partisans, and cross-bow quarries, and other weapons made upon his body a most mighty din, that above every other noise and shout was heard the thud of those great strokes. But he, like one who had the mastery of war, set his charger where the press was thickest, jostling now one and now another; so that he ever kept at least ten men of his foes stretched on the ground beneath his horse's hoofs; which horse was a most fierce beast, and gave his enemies what trouble he best could. And now that gentle lord was all fordone with sweat and toil, he and his charger; and so weary were they that scarcely could they any longer breathe."

Soon after the Baglioni mustered in force. One by one their heroes rushed from the palaces. The enemy were driven back with slaughter; and a war ensued which made the fair land between Assisi and Perugia a wilderness for many months. It must not be forgotten that at the time of these great feats of

Simonetto and Astorre young Raphael was painting in the studio of Perugino. What the whole city witnessed with astonishment and admiration, he, the keenly sensitive artist-boy, treasured in his memory. Therefore in the St. George of the Louvre, and in the mounted horseman trampling upon Heliodorus in the Stanze of the Vatican, victorious Astorre lives forever, immortalized in all his splendor by the painter's art. The grinning griffin on the helmet, the resistless frown upon the forehead of the beardless knight, the terrible right arm, and the ferocious steed--all are there as Raphael saw and wrote them on his brain. One characteristic of the Baglioni, as might be plentifully illustrated from their annalist, was their eminent beauty, which inspired beholders with an enthusiasm and a love they were far from deserving by their virtues. It is this, in combination with their personal heroism, which gives a peculiarly dramatic interest to their doings, and makes the chronicle of Matarazzo more fascinating than a novel. He seems unable to write about them without using the language of an adoring lover.

In the affair of 1495 the Baglioni were at amity among themselves. When they next appear upon the scene, they are engaged in deadly feud. Cousin had set his hand to the throat of cousin, and the two heroes of the piazza are destined to be slain by foulest treachery of their own kin. It must be premised that besides the sons of Guido and Ridolfo already named, the great house counted among its most distinguished members a young Grifone, or Grifonetto, the son of Grifone and Atalanta Baglioni. Both his father and grandfather had died violent deaths in the prime of

their youth: Galeotto, the father of Atalanta, by poison, and Grifone by the knife at Ponte Ricciolo in 1477. Atalanta was left a young widow with one only son, this Grifonetto, whom Matarazzo calls “un altro Ganimede,” and who combined the wealth of two chief branches of the Baglioni. In 1500, when the events about to be related took place, he was quite a youth. Brave, rich, handsome, and married to a young wife, Zenobia Sforza, he was the admiration of Perugia. He and his wife loved each other dearly, and how, indeed, could it be otherwise, since “l’uno e l’altro sembravano doi angeli di Paradiso?” At the same time he had fallen into the hands of bad and desperate counsellors. A bastard of the house, Filippo da Braccio, his half-uncle, was always at his side, instructing him not only in the accomplishments of chivalry, but also in wild ways that brought his name into disrepute. Another of his familiars was Carlo Barciglia Baglioni, an unquiet spirit, who longed for more power than his poverty and comparative obscurity allowed. With them associated Jeronimo della Penna, a veritable ruffian, contaminated from his earliest youth with every form of lust and violence, and capable of any crime.\* These three companions, instigated partly by the lord of Camerino and partly by their own cupidity, conceived a scheme for massacring the families of Guido and Ridolfo at one blow. As a consequence of this wholesale murder, Perugia would be at their discretion.

\* Matarazzo’s description of the russians who surrounded Grifonetto (pp. 104, 105, 113) would suit Webster’s Flamineo or Bosola. In one place he likens Filippo to Achitophel and Grifonetto to Absalom. Villano Villani, quoted by Fabretti (vol. III. p. 125), relates the street adventures of this clique. It is a curious picture of the pranks of an Italian princeling in the fifteenth century.

Seeing of what use Grifonetto by his wealth and name might be to them, they did all they could to persuade him to join their conurbation. It would appear that the bait first offered him was the sovereignty of the city, but that he was at last gained over by being made to believe that his wife, Zenobia, had carried on an intrigue with Gianpaolo Baglioni. The dissolute morals of the family gave plausibility to an infernal trick which worked upon the jealousy of Grifonetto. Thirsting for revenge, he consented to the scheme. The conspirators were further fortified by the accession of Jeronimo della Staffa, and three members of the house of Corgna. It is noticeable that out of the whole number only two—Bernardo da Corgna and Filippo da Braccio—were above the age of thirty. Of the rest, few had reached twenty-five. At so early an age were the men of those times adepts in violence and treason. The execution of the plot was fixed for the wedding festivities of Astorre Baglioni with Lavinia, the daughter of Giovanni Colonna and Giustina Orsini. At that time the whole Baglioni family were to be assembled in Perugia, with the single exception of Marcantonio, who was taking baths at Naples for his health. It was known that the members of the noble house, nearly all of them *condottieri* by trade, and eminent for their great strength and skill in arms, took few precautions for their safety. They occupied several houses close together between the Porta San Carlo and the Porta Eburnea, set no regular guard over their sleeping-chambers, and trusted to their personal bravery and to the fidelity of their attendants.\* It was

\* Jacobo Antiquari, the secretary of Lodovico Sforza, in a curious letter, which gives an account of the massacre, says that he

thought that they might be assassinated in their beds. The wedding festivities began upon the 28th of July, and great is the particularity with which Matarazzo describes the doings of each successive day—processions, jousts, triumphal arches, banquets, balls, and pageants. The night of the 14th of August was finally set apart for the consummation of *el gran tradimento*: it is thus that Matarazzo always alludes to the crime of Grifonetto, with a solemnity of reiteration that is most impressive. A heavy stone let fall into the courtyard of Guido Baglioni's palace was to be the signal: each conspirator was then to run to the sleeping-chamber of his appointed prey. Two of the principals and fifteen *bravi* were told off to each victim: rams and crow-bars were prepared to force the doors if needful. All happened as had been anticipated. The crash of the falling stone was heard. The conspirators rushed to the scene of operations. Astorre, who was sleeping in the house of his traitorous cousin Grifonetto, was slain in the arms of his young bride, crying, as he vainly struggled, “Misero Astorre che more come poltrone!” Simonetto, who lay that night with a lad called Paolo he greatly loved, flew to arms, exclaiming to his brother, “Non dubitare Gismondo, mio fratello!” He, too, was soon despatched, together with his bedfellow. Filippo da Braccio, after killing him, tore from a great wound in his side the still quivering heart, into which he drove his teeth with savage fury. Old Guido died groaning “Ora è gionto il punto mio;” and Gismondo's throat was cut while he lay

had often reproved the Baglioni for “sleeping in their beds without any guard or watch, so that they might easily be overcome by enemies.”

holding back his face that he might be spared the sight of his own massacre. The corpses of Astorre and Simonetto were stripped and thrown out naked into the streets. Men gathered round and marvelled to see such heroic forms, with faces so proud and fierce even in death. In especial the foreign students likened them to ancient Romans.\* But on their fingers were rings, and these the ruffians of the place would fain have hacked off with their knives. From this indignity the noble limbs were spared; then the dead Baglioni were hurriedly consigned to an unhonored tomb. Meanwhile the rest of the intended victims managed to escape. Gianpaolo, assailed by Grifonetto and Gianfrancesco della Corgna, took refuge with his squire and bedfellow, Maraglia, upon a staircase leading from his room. While the squire held the passage with his pike against the foe, Gianpaolo effected his flight over neighboring house-roofs. He crept into the attic of some foreign students, who, trembling with terror, gave him food and shelter, clad him in a scholar's gown, and helped him to fly in this disguise from the gates at dawn. He then joined his brother Troilo at Marsciano, whence he returned without delay to punish the traitors. At the same time Grifonetto's mother, Atalanta, taking with her his wife, Zenobia, and the two young sons of Gianpolo, Malatesta and Orazio, afterwards so celebrated in Italian history for their great feats of arms and their crimes, fled to her

\* "Quelli che li vidino, e maxime li forastiere studiante assimigliavano el magnifico Messer Astorre così morto ad un antico Romano, perchè prima era unanissimo; tanto sua figura era degnia e magnia," etc. This is a touch exquisitely illustrative of the Renaissance enthusiasm for classic culture.

country-house at Landona. Grifonetto in vain sought to see her there. She drove him from her presence with curses for the treason and the fratricide that he had planned. It is very characteristic of these wild natures, framed of fierce instincts and discordant passions, that his mother's curse weighed like lead upon the unfortunate young man. Next day, when Gianpaolo returned to try the luck of arms, Grifonetto, deserted by the companions of his crime and paralyzed by the sense of his guilt, went out alone to meet him on the public place. The semi-failure of their scheme had terrified the conspirators: the horrors of that night of blood unnerved them. All had fled except the next victim of the feud. Putting his sword to the youth's throat, Gianpaolo looked into his eyes and said, "Art thou here, Grifonetto? Go with God's peace: I will not slay thee, nor plunge my hand in my own blood, as thou hast done in thine." Then he turned and left the lad to be hacked in pieces by his guard. The untranslatable words which Matarazzo uses to describe his death are touching from the strong impression they convey of Grifonetto's goodness: "Qui ebbe sua signoria sopra sua nobile persona tante ferite che suoi membra leggiadre stese in terra."\* None but Greeks felt the charm of personal beauty thus. But while Grifonetto was breathing out his life upon the pavement of the piazza, his mother, Atalanta, and his wife, Zenobia, came to greet him through the awe-struck city. As they approached, all men fell aside and slunk away before their grief. None would seem to have had a share in Grifonetto's murder.

\* Here his lordship received upon his noble person so many wounds that he stretched his graceful limbs upon the earth.

Then Atalanta knelt by her dying son, and ceased from wailing, and prayed and exhorted him to pardon those who had caused his death. It appears that Grifonetto was too weak to speak, but that he made a signal of assent, and received his mother's blessing at the last: "E allora porse el nobil giovenetto la dextra mano a la sua giovenile matre strengendo de sua matre la bianca mano; e poi incontinentе spirò l'anima dal formoso corpo, e passò cum infinite benedizioni de sua matre in cambio de la maledictione che prima li aveva date."\* Here, again, the style of Matarazzo, tender and full of tears, conveys the keenest sense of the pathos of beauty and of youth in death and sorrow. He has forgotten *el gran tradimento*. He only remembers how comely Grifonetto was, how noble, how frank and spirited, how strong in war, how sprightly in his pleasures and his loves. And he sees the still young mother, delicate and nobly born, leaning over the athletic body of her bleeding son. This scene, which is, perhaps, a genuine instance of what we may call the Neohellenism of the Renaissance, finds its parallel in the *Phænissæ* of Euripides. Jocasta and Antigone have gone forth to the battle-field and found the brothers Polynices and Eteocles drenched in blood:

From his chest

Heaving a heavy breath, King Eteocles heard  
His mother, and stretched forth a cold, damp hand  
On hers, and nothing said, but with his eyes  
Spake to her by his tears, showing kind thoughts  
In symbols.

\* And then the noble stripling stretched his right hand to his youthful mother, pressing the white hand of his mother; and afterwards forthwith he breathed his soul forth from his beauteous body,

It was Atalanta, we may remember, who commissioned Raphael to paint the so-called Borghese Tombment. Did she, perhaps, feel, as she withdrew from the piazza, soaking with young Grifonetto's blood,\* that she, too, had some portion in the sorrow of that mother who had wept for Christ? The memory of the dreadful morning must have remained with her through life, and long communion with our Lady of Sorrows may have sanctified the grief that had so bitter and so shameful a root of sin.

After the death of Grifonetto and the flight of the conspirators, Gianpaolo took possession of Perugia. All who were suspected of complicity in the treason were massacred upon the piazza and in the cathedral. At the expense of more than a hundred murders, the chief of the Baglioni found himself master of the city on the 17th of July. First he caused the cathedral to be washed with wine and reconsecrated. Then he decorated the Palazzo with the heads of the traitors and with their portraits in fresco, painted hanging head downwards, as was the fashion in Italy.\*\* Next he established himself in what remained of the palaces of his kindred, hanging the saloons with black, and arraying his retainers in the deepest mourning. Sad, indeed, was now the aspect of Perugia. Helpless and comparatively uninterested, the citizens had been spectators of these bloody broils. They were now bound

and died with numberless blessings of his mother instead of the curses she had given him before.

\* See Matarazzo, p. 134, for this detail.

\*\* See Varchi (ed. Lemonnier, 1857), vol. II, p. 265, vol. III. pp. 224, 652, and Corio (Venice, 1554), p. 326, for instances of *dipinti par traditori*.

to share the desolation of their masters. Matarazzo's description of the mournful palace and the silent town, and of the return of Marcantonio from Naples, presents a picture striking for its vividness.\* In the true style of the Baglioni, Marcantonio sought to vent his sorrow not so much in tears as by new violence. He prepared and lighted torches, meaning to burn the whole quarter of St. Angelo; and from this design he was with difficulty dissuaded by his brother. To such mad freaks of rage and passion were the inhabitants of a mediæval town in Italy exposed! They make us understand the *ordinanze di giustizia*, by which to be a noble was a crime in Florence.

From this time forward the whole history of the Baglioni family is one of crime and bloodshed. A curse had fallen on the house, and to the last of its members the penalty was paid. Gianpaolo himself acquired the highest reputation throughout Italy for his courage and sagacity both as a general and a governor.\*\* It was he who held Julius II. at his discretion in 1506, and was sneered at by Machiavelli for not consummating his enormities by killing the warlike Pope.\*\*\* He again, after joining the diet of La

\* Page 142: "Pareva ogni cosa oscura e lacrimosa: tutte loro servitore piangevano; et le camere de lo resto de li magnifici Baglioni, e sale, e ognie cosa erano tutte intorno cum pagnie negre. E per la città non era più alcuno che sonasse nè cantasse; e poco si rideva," etc.

\*\* See Frolliere, p. 437, for a very curious account of his character.

\*\*\* Fabretti (vol. III. pp. 193—292, and notes) discusses this circumstance in detail. Machiavelli's critique runs thus (Discorsi, lib. I. cap. 27): "Nè si poteva credere che si fosse astenuto o per bontà, o per coscienza che lo ritenesse; perchè in un petto d'un uomo facinoroso, che si teneva la sorella, ch'aveva morti i cugini e i nipoti per regnare, non poteva scendere alcuno pietoso rispetto:

Magione against Cesare Borgia, escaped by his acumen the massacre of Sinigaglia, which overthrew the other conspirators. But his name was no less famous for unbridled lust and deeds of violence. He boasted that his son Constantino was a true Baglioni, since he was his sister's child. He once told Machiavelli that he had it in his mind to murder four citizens of Perugia, his enemies. He looked calmly on while his kinsmen Eusebio and Taddeo Baglioni, who had been accused of treason, were hewn to pieces by his guard. His wife, Ippolita de' Conti, was poniarded on her Roman farm; on hearing the news, he ordered a festival in which he was engaged to proceed with redoubled merriment.\* At last the time came for him to die by fraud and violence. Leo X., anxious to remove so powerful a rival from Perugia, lured him in 1520 to Rome under the false protection of a papal safe-conduct. After a short imprisonment he had him beheaded in the Castle of St. Angelo. It was thought that Gentile, his first cousin, sometime Bishop of Orvieto, but afterwards the father of two sons in wedlock with Giulia Vitelli—such was the discipline of the Church at this epoch—had contributed to the capture of Gianpaolo, and had exulted in his execution.\*\* If so, he paid dear for his treachery; for Orazio Baglioni, the second son of Gianpaolo and captain of the Church under Clement VII., had him murdered in

ma si conchiuse che gli uomini non sanno essere onorevolmente tristi, o perfettamente buoni," etc.

\* See Fabretti, vol. III. p. 230. He is an authority for the details of Gianpaolo's life. The circumstance alluded to above justifies the terrible opening scene in Shelley's tragedy, *The Cenci*.

\*\* Fabretti, vol. III. p. 230, vol. IV. p. 10.

1527, together with his two nephews Fileno and Annibale.\* This Orazio was one of the most blood-thirsty of the whole brood. Not satisfied with the assassination of Gentile, he stabbed Galeotto, the son of Grifonetto, with his own hand in the same year.\*\* Afterwards he died in the kingdom of Naples while leading the Black Bands in the disastrous war which followed the sack of Rome. He left no son. Malatesta, his elder brother, became one of the most celebrated generals of the age, holding the batons of the Venetian and Florentine republics, and managing to maintain his ascendancy in Perugia in spite of the persistent opposition of successive popes. But his name is best known in history for one of the greatest public crimes. Intrusted with the defence of Florence during the siege of 1530, he sold the city to his enemy, Pope Clement, receiving for the price of this infamy certain privileges and immunities which fortified his hold upon Perugia for a season. All Italy was ringing with the great deeds of the Florentines, who for the sake of their liberty transformed themselves from merchants into soldiers, and withstood the united powers of pope and emperor alone. Meanwhile Malatesta, whose trade was war, and who was being largely paid for his services by the beleaguered city, contrived by means of diplomatic procrastination, secret communication with the enemy, and all the arts that could intimidate an army of recruits, to push affairs to a point at which Florence was forced to capitulate without inflicting the last desperate glorious blow she longed to deal her enemies. The universal voice of

\* See Varchi, *Storie Florentine*, vol. I. p. 224.

\*\* *Ibid.*

Italy condemned him. When Matteo Dandolo, the Doge of Venice, heard what he had done, he cried before the Pregadi in conclave, "He has sold that people and that city, and the blood of those poor citizens ounce by ounce, and has donned the cap of the biggest traitor in the world."\* Consumed with shame, corroded by an infamous disease, and mistrustful of Clement, to whom he had sold his honor, Malatesta retired to Perugia, and died in 1531. He left one son, Ridolfo, who was unable to maintain himself in the lordship of his native city. After killing the papal legate, Cinzio Filonardi, in 1534, he was dislodged four years afterwards, when Paul III. took final possession of the place as an appanage of the Church, razed the houses of the Baglioni to the ground, and built upon their site the Rocca Paolina. This fortress bore an inscription: "Ad coercendam Perusinorum audaciam." The city was given over to the rapacity of the abominable Pier Luigi Farnese, and so bad was this tyranny of priests and bastards, that, strange to say, the Perugians regretted the troublous times of the Baglioni. Malatesta in dying had exclaimed, "Help me, if you can; since after me you will be set to draw the cart like oxen." Frolliere, relating the speech, adds, "And this has been fulfilled to the last letter, for all have borne not only the yoke but the burden and the goad." Ridolfo Baglioni and his cousin Braccio, the eldest son of Grifonetto, were both captains of Florence. The one died in battle in 1554, the other in 1559. Thus ended the illustrious family. They are now represented by descendants from females,

\* Fabretti, vol. IV. p. 206.

and by *contadini* who preserve their name and boast a pedigree of which they have no records.

The history of the Baglioni needs no commentary. They were not worse than other Italian nobles who by their passions and their parties destroyed the peace of the city they infested. It is with an odd mixture of admiration and discontent that the chroniclers of Perugia allude to their ascendancy. Matarazzo, who certainly cannot be accused of hostility to the great house, describes the miseries of his country under their bad government in piteous terms: \* "As I wish not to swerve from the pure truth, I say that from the day the Oddi were expelled, our city went from bad to worse. All the young men followed the trade of arms. Their lives were disorderly; and every day divers excesses were indulged, and the city had lost all reason and justice. Every man administered right unto himself, *propria autoritate et manu regia*. Meanwhile the Pope sent many legates, if so be the city could be brought to order; but all who came returned in dread of being hewn in pieces; for they threatened to throw some from the windows of the palace, so that no cardinal or other legate durst approach Perugia, unless he were a friend of the Baglioni. And the city was brought to such misery that the most wrongous men were most prized; and those who had slain two or three men walked as they listed through the palace, and went with sword or poniard to speak to the *podestà* and other magistrates. Moreover, every man of worth was downtrodden by *bravi* whom the nobles favored; nor could a citizen call his property his own. The nobles robbed first

\* Pages 102, 103.

one and then another of goods and land. All offices were sold or else suppressed; and taxes and extortions were so grievous that every one cried out. And if a man were in prison for his head, he had no reason to fear death, provided he had some interest with a noble." Yet the same Matarazzo in another place finds it in his heart to say: \* "Though the city suffered great pains for these nobles, yet the illustrious house of Baglioni brought her honor throughout Italy, by reason of the great dignity and splendor of that house, and of their pomp and name. Wherefore through them our city was often set above the rest, and notably above the commonwealths of Florence and Siena." Pride feels no pain. The gratified vanity of the Perugian burgher, proud to see his town preferred before its neighbors, blinds the annalist to all the violence and villany of the magnificent *Casa Baglioni*. So strong was the *esprit de ville* which through successive centuries and amid all vicissitudes of politics divided the Italians against themselves, and proved an insuperable obstacle to unity.

After reading the chronicle of Matarazzo at Perugia through one winter day, I left the inn and walked at sunset to the blood-bedabbled cathedral square; for still those steps and pavements to my strained imagination seemed reeking with the outpoured blood of Baglioni; and on the ragged stonework of San Lorenzo red patches slanted from the dying day. Then by one of those strange freaks of the brain to which we are all subject, for a moment I lost sight of untidy Gothic façades and gaunt, unfinished church walls; and as I

\* Page 139.

walked, I was in the Close of Salisbury on a perfumed summer afternoon. The drowsy scent of lime-flowers and mignonette, the cawing of elm-crpled rooks, the hum of bees above, the velvet touch of smooth-shorn grass, and the breathless shadow of motionless green boughs made up one potent and absorbing mood of the charmed senses. Far overhead soared the calm gray spire into the infinite air, and the perfection of accomplished beauty slept beneath in those long lines of nave and choir and transepts. It was but a momentary dream, a thought that burned itself upon a fancy overtaxed by passionate images. Once more the puppet-scene of the brain was shifted; once more I saw the bleak, bare flags of the Perugian piazza, the forlorn front of the Duomo, the bronze griffin, and Pisano's fountain, with here and there a flake of that tumultuous fire which the Italian sunset sheds. Who shall adequately compare the two pictures? Which shall we prefer, the Close of Salisbury, with its sleepy bells and cushioned ease of immemorial deans, or this poor threadbare passion of Perugia, where every stone is stained with blood, and where genius in painters and scholars and prophets and ecstatic lovers has throbbed itself away to nothingness? It would be foolish to seek an answer to this question, idle to institute a comparison, for instance, between those tall young men with their broad winter cloaks who remind me of Grifonetto, and the vergers pottering in search of shillings along the gravel-paths of Salisbury. It is more rational, perhaps, to reflect of what strange stuff our souls are made in this age of the world, when æsthetic pleasures, full, genuine, and satisfying, can be communicated alike by Perugia with its fascination of

a dead, irrevocable, dramatic past, and Salisbury, which finds the artistic climax of its English comfort in the "Angel of the house." From Matarazzo, smitten with a Greek love for the beautiful Grifonetto, to Mr. Patmore, is a wide step.

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## ORVIETO.

ON the road from Siena to Rome, half-way between Ficulle and Viterbo, is the town of Orvieto. Travellers often pass it in the night-time. Few stop there, for the place is old and dirty, and its inns are said to be indifferent. But none who see it even from a distance can fail to be struck with its imposing aspect, as it rises from the level plain upon that mass of rock among the Apennines.

Orvieto is built upon the first of those huge volcanic blocks which are found like fossils imbedded in the more recent geological formations of Central Italy, and which stretch in an irregular but unbroken line to the Campagna of Rome. Many of them, like that on which Civita Castellana is perched, are surrounded by rifts and chasms and ravines and fosses, strangely furrowed and twisted by the force of fiery convulsions. But their advanced guard, Orvieto, stands up definite and solid, an almost perfect cube, with walls precipitous to north and south and east, but slightly sloping to the westward. At its foot rolls the Paglia, one of those barren streams which swell in winter with the snows and rains of the Apennines, but which in summer-time shrink up and leave bare beds of sand and pestilential cane-brakes to stretch irregularly round their dwindled waters.

The weary flatness and utter desolation of this

valley present a sinister contrast to the broad line of the Apennines, swelling tier on tier, from their oak-girdled basements set with villages and towers, up to the snow and cloud that crown their topmost crags. The time to see this landscape is at sunrise; and the traveller should take his stand upon the rising ground over which the Roman road is carried from the town —the point, in fact, which Turner has selected for his vague and misty sketch of Orvieto in our Gallery. Thence he will command the whole space of the plain, the Apennines, and the river creeping in a straight line at the base; while the sun, rising to his right, will slant along the mountain flanks, and gild the leaden stream, and flood the castled crags of Orvieto with a haze of light. From the centre of this glory stand out in bold relief old bastions built upon the solid tufa, vast gaping gateways black in shadow, towers of churches shooting up above a medley of deep-corniced tall Italian houses, and, amid them all, the marble front of the cathedral, calm and solemn in its unfamiliar Gothic state. Down to the valley from these heights there is a sudden fall; and we wonder how the few spare olive-trees that grow there can support existence on the steep slope of the cliff.

Our mind, in looking at this landscape, is carried by the force of old association to Jerusalem. We could fancy ourselves to be standing on Mount Olivet, with the valley of Jehoshaphat between us and the Sacred City. As we approach the town, the difficulty of scaling its crags seems insurmountable. The road, though carried skilfully along each easy slope, or ledge of quarried rock, still winds so much that nearly an hour is spent in the ascent. Those who can walk should

take a footpath, and enter Orvieto by the mediæval road, up which many a pope, flying from rebellious subjects or foreign enemies, has hurried on his mule.\*

To unaccustomed eyes there is something forbidding and terrible about the dark and cindery appearance of volcanic tufa. Where it is broken, the hard and gritty edges leave little space for vegetation; while at intervals the surface spreads so smooth and straight that one might take it for solid masonry erected by the architect of Pandemonium. Rubbish and shattered bits of earthenware and ashes, thrown from the city walls, cling to every ledge and encumber the broken pavement of the footway. Then as we rise the castle battlements above appear more menacing, toppling upon the rough edge of the crag, and guarding each turn of the road with jealous loopholes or beetle-browed machicolations, until at last the gateway and portcullis are in view.

On first entering Orvieto, one's heart fails to find so terrible a desolation, so squalid a solitude, and so vast a difference between the present and the past, between the beauty of surrounding nature and the misery of this home of men. A long space of unoccupied ground intervenes between the walls and the hovels which skirt the modern town. This, in the times of its splendor, may have served for olive-yards, vineyards, and pasturage, in case of siege. There are still some faint traces of dead gardens left upon its arid

\* Clement VII., for example, escaped from Rome disguised as a gardener after the sack in 1527, and, to quote the words of Varchi (St. Flor. v. 17), "Entrò agli otto di dicembre a due ore di notte in Orvieto, terra di sito fortissimo, per lo essere ella sopra uno scoglio pieno di tufi posta, d'ogni intorno scosceso a dirupato," etc.

wilderness, among the ruins of a castellated palace decorated with the cross-keys and tiara of an unremembered pope. But now it lies a mere tract of scorched grass, insufferably hot and dry and sandy, intersected by dirty paths, and covered with the loathliest offal of a foul Italian town. Should you cross this ground at mid-day, under the blinding sun, when no living thing, except perhaps some poisonous reptile, is about, you would declare that Orvieto had been stricken for its sins by Heaven. Your mind would dwell mechanically on all that you have read of papal crimes, of fratricidal wars, of pagan abominations in the high places of the Church, of tempestuous passions and refined iniquity—of everything, in fact, which renders Italy of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance dark and ominous amid the splendors of her art and civilization. This is the natural result; this shrunken and squalid old age of poverty and self-abandonment is the end of that strong, prodigal, and vicious youth. Who shall restore vigor to these dead bones? we cry. If Italy is to live again, she must quit her ruined palace towers to build fresh dwellings elsewhere. Filth, lust, rapacity, treason, godlessness, and violence have made their habitation here; ghosts haunt these ruins; these streets still smell of blood and echo to the cries of injured innocence; life cannot be pure or calm or healthy where this curse has settled.

Occupied with such reflections, we reach the streets of Orvieto. They are not very different from those of most Italian villages, except that there is little gayety about them. Like Assisi or Siena, Orvieto is too large for its population, and merriment flows better from close crowding than from spacious accommodation.

Very dark and big and dirty and deserted is the judgment we pronounce upon the houses; very filthy and malodorous each passage; very long this central street; very few and sad and sullen the inhabitants; and where, we wonder, is the promised inn? In search of this one walks nearly through the city, until one enters the Piazza, where there is more liveliness. Here cafés may be found; soldiers, strong and sturdy, from the north, lounge at the corners; the shops present more show; and a huge hotel, not bad for such a place, and appropriately dedicated to the Belle Arti, standing in a court-yard of its own, receives the traveller weary with his climb. As soon as he has taken rooms, his first desire is to go forth and visit the cathedral.

The great Duomo was erected at the end of the thirteenth century to commemorate the Miracle of Bolsena. The value of this miracle consisted in its establishing unmistakably the truth of transubstantiation. The story runs that a young Bohemian priest who doubted the dogma was performing the office of the mass in a church at Bolsena, when, at the moment of consecration, blood issued from five gashes in the wafer, which resembled the five wounds of Christ. The fact was evident to all the worshippers, who saw blood falling on the linen of the altar; and the young priest no longer doubted, but confessed the miracle, and journeyed straightway with the evidence thereof to Pope Urban IV. The Pope, who was then at Orvieto, came out with all his retinue to meet the convert and do honor to the magic-working relics. The circumstances of this miracle are well known to students of art through Raphael's celebrated fresco in the Stanze of the Vatican. And it will be remembered by the

readers of ecclesiastical history that Urban had in 1264 promulgated by a bull the strict observance of the Corpus Christi festival in connection with his strong desire to re-establish the doctrine of Christ's presence in the elements. Nor was it without reason that, while seeking miraculous support for this dogma, he should have treated the affair of Bolsena so seriously as to celebrate it by the erection of one of the most splendid cathedrals in Italy; for the peace of the Church had recently been troubled by the reforming ardor of the Fraticelli and by the promulgation of Abbot Joachim's Eternal Gospel. This new evangelist had preached the doctrine of progression in religious faith, proclaiming a kingdom of the Spirit which should transcend the kingdom of the Son, even as the Christian dispensation had superseded the Jewish supremacy of the Father. Nor did he fail at the same time to attack the political and moral abuses of the papacy, attributing its degradation to the want of vitality which pervaded the old Christian system, and calling on the clergy to lead more simple and regenerate lives, consistently with the spiritual doctrine which he had received by inspiration. The theories of Joachim were immature and crude; but they were among the first signs of that liberal effort after self-emancipation which eventually stirred all Europe at the time of the Renaissance. It was, therefore, the obvious policy of the popes to crush so dangerous an opposition while they could; and by establishing the dogma of transubstantiation, they were enabled to satisfy the craving mysticism of the people, while they placed upon a firmer basis the cardinal support of their own religious power.

In pursuance of his plan, Urban sent for Lorenzo

Maitani, the great Sienese architect, who gave designs for a Gothic church in the same style as the Cathedral of Siena, though projected on a smaller scale. These two churches, in spite of numerous shortcomings manifest to an eye trained in French or English architecture, are still the most perfect specimens of Pointed Gothic produced by the Italian genius. The *Gottico Tedesco* had never been received with favor in Italy. Remains of Roman architecture, then far more numerous and perfect than they are at present, controlled the minds of artists, and induced them to adopt the rounded rather than the pointed arch. Indeed, there would seem to be something peculiarly Northern in the spirit of Gothic architecture; its intricacies suit the gloom of Northern skies, its massive exterior is adapted to the severity of Northern weather, its vast windows catch the fleeting sunlight of the North, and the pinnacles and spires which constitute its beauty are better expressed in rugged stone than in the marbles of the South. Northern cathedrals do not depend for their effect upon the advantages of sunlight or picturesque situations. Many of them are built upon broad plains, over which for more than half the year hangs fog. But the cathedrals of Italy owe their charm to color and brilliancy; their gilded sculpture and mosaics, the variegated marbles and shallow portals of their façades, the light aerial elegance of their *campanili*, are all adapted to the luminous atmosphere of a smiling land, where changing effects of natural beauty distract the attention from solidity of design and permanence of grandeur in the edifice.\*

\* In considering why Gothic architecture took so little root in mediæval Italy, we must remember that the Italians had maintained

The Cathedral of Orvieto will illustrate these remarks. Its design is very simple. It consists of a parallelogram, from which three chapels of equal size project, one at the east end, and one at the north and south. The windows are small and narrow, the columns round, and the roof displays none of that intricate groining we find in English churches. The beauty of the interior depends on surface decoration, on marble statues, woodwork, and fresco-paintings. Outside, there is the same simplicity of design, the same elaborated local ornament. The sides of the cathedral are austere, their narrow windows cutting horizontal lines of black and white marble. But the façade is a triumph of decorative art. It is strictly what has often been described as a "frontispiece;" for it bears no sincere relation to the construction of the building. The three gables rise high above the aisles. The pinnacles and parapets and turrets are stuck on to look agreeable. It is a screen such as might be completed or left unfinished at will by the architect. Finished as it is, the façade of Orvieto presents a wilderness of beauties. Its pure white marble has been mellowed by time to a

an unbroken connection with pagan Rome, and that many of their finest churches were basilicas appropriated to Christian rites. Add to this that the commerce of their cities, which first acquired wealth in the twelfth century, especially Pisa and Venice, kept them in communication with the Levant, where they admired the masterpieces of Byzantine architecture, and whence they imported Greek artists in mosaic and stone-work. Against these external circumstances, taken in connection with the hereditary leanings of an essentially Latin race, and with the natural conditions of landscape and climate alluded to above, the influence of a few imported German architects could not have had sufficient power to effect a thorough metamorphosis of the national taste. For further treatment of this subject see my *Fine Arts, Renaissance in Italy*, part III. chap. II.

rich golden hue, in which are set mosaics shining like gems or pictures of enamel. A statue stands on every pinnacle; each pillar has a different design; round some of them are woven wreaths of vine and ivy; acanthus-leaves curl over the capitals, making nests for singing-birds or Cupids; the doorways are a labyrinth of intricate designs, in which the utmost elegance of form is made more beautiful by incrustations of precious agates and Alexandrine glass-work. On every square inch of this wonderful façade have been lavished invention, skill, and precious material. But its chief interest centres in the sculptures executed by Giovanni and Andrea, sons and pupils of Nicola Pisano. The names of these three men mark an era in the history of art. They first rescued Italian sculpture from the grotesqueness of the Lombard and the wooden monotony of the Byzantine styles. Sculpture takes the lead of all the arts. And Nicola Pisano, before Cimabue, before Duccio, even before Dante, opened the gates of beauty, which for a thousand years had been shut up and overgrown with weeds. As Dante invoked the influence of Virgil when he began to write his mediæval poem, and made a heathen bard his hierophant in Christian mysteries, just so did Nicola Pisano draw inspiration from a Græco-Roman sarcophagus. He studied the bass-relief of Phædra and Hippolytus, which may still be seen upon the tomb of Countess Beatrice in the Campo Santo, and so learned by heart the beauty of its lines and the dignity expressed in its figures that in all his subsequent works we trace the elevated tranquillity of Greek sculpture. This imitation never degenerated into servile copying; nor, on the other hand, did Nicola attain the perfect grace of an Athenian

artist. He remained a truly mediæval carver, animated with a Christian instead of a pagan spirit, but caring for the loveliness of form which art in the dark ages failed to realize.\*

Whether it was Nicola or his scholars who designed the bass-reliefs at Orvieto is of little consequence. Vasari ascribes them to the father; but we know that he completed his pulpit at Pisa in 1230, and his death is supposed to have taken place fifteen years before the foundation of the cathedral. At any rate, they are imbued with his genius, and bear the strongest affinity to his sculptures at Pisa, Siena, and Bologna. To estimate the influence they exercised over the arts of sculpture and painting in Italy would be a difficult task. Duccio and Giotto studied here; Ghiberti closely followed them. Signorelli and Raphael made drawings from their compositions. And the spirit which pervades these sculptures may be traced in all succeeding works of art. It is not classic; it is modern, though embodied in a form of beauty modelled on the Greek.

The bass-reliefs are carved on four marble tablets placed beside the porches of the church, and corresponding in size and shape with the chief doorways. They represent the course of Biblical history, beginning with the creation of the world, and ending with the last judgment. If it were possible here to compare them in detail with the similar designs of Ghiberti, Michael Angelo, and Raphael, it might be shown that the Pisani established modes of treating sacred subjects

\* I am not inclined to reject the old legend mentioned above about Pisano's study of the antique. For a full discussion of the question see my *Fine Arts, Renaissance in Italy*, part III. chap. III.

from which those mighty masters never deviated, though each stamped upon them his peculiar genius, making them more perfect as time added to the power of art. It would also be not without interest to show that, in their primitive conceptions of the earliest events in history, the works of the Pisan artists closely resemble some sculptures executed on the walls of Northern cathedrals, as well as early mosaics in the south of Italy. We might have noticed how all the grotesque elements which appear in Nicola Pisano, and which may be traced in Ghiberti, are entirely lost in Michael Angelo, how the supernatural is humanized, how the symbolical receives an actual expression, and how intellectual types are substituted for mere local and individual representations. For instance, the Pisani represent the Creator as a young man standing on the earth, with a benign and dignified expression, and attended by two ministering angels. He is the Christ of the Creed, "by whom all things were made." In Ghiberti we find an older man, sometimes appearing in a whirlwind of clouds and attendant spirits, sometimes walking on the earth, but still far different in conception from the Creative Father of Michael Angelo. The latter is rather the Platonic Demiurgus than the Mosaic God. By every line and feature of his face and flowing hair, by each movement of his limbs, whether he ride on clouds between the waters and the firmament, or stand alone creating by a glance and by a motion of his hand Eve, the full-formed and conscious woman, he is proclaimed the Maker who from all eternity has held the thought of the material universe within his mind. Raphael does not depart from this conception. The profound abstraction of Michael Angelo

ruled his intellect, and received from his genius a form of perhaps greater grace. A similar growth from the germinal designs of the Pisani may be traced in many groups.

But we must not linger at the gate. Let us enter the cathedral and see some of the wonders it contains. Statues of gigantic size adorn the nave. Of these, the most beautiful are the work of Ippolito Scalza, an artist whom Orvieto claims with pride as one of her own sons. The long line of saints and apostles whom they represent conduct us to the high-altar, surrounded by its shadowy frescos, and gleaming with the work of carvers in marble and bronze and precious metals. But our steps are drawn towards the chapel of the south transept, where now a golden light from the autumnal sunset falls across a crowd of worshippers. From far and near the poor people are gathered. Most of them are women. They kneel upon the pavement and the benches, sunburnt faces from the vineyards and the canebrakes of the valley. The old look prematurely aged and withered—their wrinkled cheeks bound up in scarlet and orange-colored kerchiefs, their skinny fingers fumbling on the rosary, and their mute lips moving in prayer. The younger women have great listless eyes and large limbs used to labor. Some of them carry babies trussed up in tight swaddling-clothes. One kneels beside a dark-browed shepherd, on whose shoulder falls his shaggy hair; and little children play about, half hushed, half heedless of the place, among old men whose life has dwindled down into a ceaseless round of prayers. We wonder why this chapel, alone in the empty cathedral, is so crowded with worshippers. They surely are not turned towards that splendid Pietà

of Scalza—a work in which the marble seems to live a cold, dead, shivering life. They do not heed Angelico's and Signorelli's frescos on the roof and walls. The interchange of light and gloom upon the stalls and carved work of the canopies can scarcely rivet so intense a gaze. All eyes seem fixed upon a curtain of red silk above the altar. Votive pictures, and glass cases full of silver hearts, wax babies, hands and limbs of every kind, are hung round it. A bell rings. A jingling organ plays a little melody in triple time; and from the sacristy comes forth the priest. With much reverence, and with a show of preparation, he and the acolytes around him mount the altar steps and pull a string which draws the curtain. Behind the silken veil we behold Madonna and her child—a faint, old, ugly picture, blackened with the smoke and incense of five hundred years, a wonder-working image, cased in gold, and guarded from the common air by glass and draperies. Jewelled crowns are stuck upon the heads of the mother and the infant. In the efficacy of Madonna di San Brizio to ward off agues, to deliver from the pangs of childbirth or the fury of the storm, to keep the lover's troth and make the husband faithful to his home, these pious women of the marshes and the mountains put a simple trust.

While the priest sings and the people pray to the dance-music of the organ let us take a quiet seat unseen and picture to our minds how the chapel looked when Angelico and Signorelli stood before its plastered walls and thought the thoughts with which they covered them. Four centuries have gone by since those walls were white and even to their brushes; and now you scarce can see the golden aureoles of saints, the vast

wings of the angels, and the flowing robes of prophets through the gloom. Angelico came first, in monk's dress, kneeling before he climbed the scaffold to paint the angry Judge, the Virgin crowned, the white-robed army of the Martyrs, and the glorious company of the Apostles. These he placed upon the roof, expectant of the Judgment. Then he passed away, and Luca Signorelli, the rich man who "lived splendidly and loved to dress himself in noble clothes," the liberal and courteous gentleman, took his place upon the scaffold. For all the worldliness of his attire and all the worldliness of his living, his brain teemed with stern and terrible thoughts. He searched the secrets of sin and of the grave, of destruction and of resurrection, of heaven and hell. All these he has painted on the walls beneath the saints of Fra Angelico. First come the troubles of the last days, the preaching of Antichrist, and the confusion of the wicked. In the next compartment we see the Resurrection from the tomb; and side by side with that is painted Hell. Paradise occupies another portion of the chapel. On each side of the window, beneath the Christ of Fra Angelico, are delineated scenes from the Judgment. A wilderness of arabesques, enclosing medallion portraits of poets and chiaroscuro episodes selected from Dante and Ovid, occupies the lower portions of the chapel walls beneath the great subjects enumerated above; and here Signorelli has given free vein to his fancy and his mastery over anatomical design, accumulating naked human figures in the most fantastic and audacious variety of pose.

Look at the "Fulminati"—so the group of wicked men are called whose death precedes the Judgment

Huge naked angels, sailing upon vanlike wings, breathe columns of red flame upon a crowd of wicked men and women. In vain these sinners avoid the descending fire. It pursues and fells them to the earth. As they fly their eyes are turned towards the dreadful faces in the air. Some hurry through a portico, huddled together, falling men, and women clasping to their arms dead babies scorched with flame. One old man stares straightforward, doggedly awaiting death. One woman scowls defiance as she dies. A youth has twisted both hands in his hair, and presses them against his ears to drown the screams and groans and roaring thunder. They trample upon prostrate forms already stiff. Every shape and attitude of sudden terror and despairing guilt are here. Next comes the Resurrection. Two angels of the Judgment—gigantic figures, with the plumeless wings that Signorelli loves—are seen upon the clouds. They blow trumpets with all their might, so that each naked muscle seems strained to make the blast, which bellows through the air and shakes the sepulchres beneath the earth. Thence rise the dead. All are naked, and a few are seen like skeletons. With painful effort they struggle from the soil that clasps them round, as if obeying an irresistible command. Some have their heads alone above the ground. Others wrench their limbs from the clinging earth; and as each man rises it closes under him. One would think that they were being born again from solid clay, and growing into form with labor. The fully risen spirits stand and walk about, all occupied with the expectation of the Judgment; but those that are yet in the act of rising have no thought but for the strange and toilsome process of this second birth. Signorelli here, as

elsewhere, proves himself one of the greatest painters by the simple means with which he produces the most marvellous effects. His composition sways our souls with all the passion of the terrible scenes that he depicts. Yet what does it contain? Two stern angels on the clouds, a blank gray plain, and a multitude of naked men and women. In the next compartment Hell is painted. This is a complicated picture, consisting of a mass of human beings entangled with torturing fiends. Above hover demons bearing damned spirits, and three angels see that justice takes its course. Signorelli here degenerates into no mediæval ugliness and mere barbarity of form. His fiends are not the bestial creatures of Pisano's bass-reliefs, but models of those monsters which Dupper has engraved from Michael Angelo's "Last Judgment"—lean, naked men, in whose hollow eyes glow the fires of hate and despair, whose nails have grown to claws, and from whose ears have started horns. They sail upon bats' wings; and only by their livid hue, which changes from yellow to the ghastliest green, and by the cruelty of their remorseless eyes, can you know them from the souls they torture. In Hell ugliness and power of mischief come with length of years. Continual growth in crime distorts the form which once was human; and the interchange of everlasting hatred degrades the tormentor and his victim to the same demoniac ferocity. To this design the science of foreshortening, and the profound knowledge of the human form in every posture, give its chief interest. Paradise is not less wonderful. Signorelli has contrived to throw variety and grace into the somewhat monotonous groups which this subject requires. Above are choirs of angels, not like Fra

Angelico's, but tall male creatures clothed in voluminous drapery, with grave features and still, solemn eyes. Some are dancing, some are singing to the lute, and one, the most gracious of them all, bends down to aid a suppliant soul. The men beneath, who listen in a state of bliss, are all undraped. Signorelli, in this difficult composition, remains temperate, serene, and simple; a Miltonic harmony pervades the movement of his angelic choirs. Their beauty is the product of their strength and virtue. No floral ornaments or cherubs, or soft clouds, are found in his Paradise; yet it is fair and full of grace. Here Luca seems to have anticipated Raphael.

It may be parenthetically observed that Signorelli has introduced himself and Niccolo Angeli, treasurer of the cathedral building fund, in the corner of the fresco representing Antichrist, with the date 1503. They stand as spectators and solemn witnesses of the tragedy set forth in all its acts by the great master.

After viewing these frescos we muse and ask ourselves why Signorelli's fame is so inadequate to his deserts? Partly, no doubt, because he painted in obscure Italian towns, and left few easel-pictures.\* Be-

\* The Uffizzi and Pitti Galleries at Florence contain one or two fine specimens of Luca Signorelli's Holy Families, which show his influence over the early manner of Michael Angelo. Into the background of one circular picture he has introduced a group of naked figures, which was imitated by Buonarroti in the Holy Family of the Tribune. The Accademia has also a picture of saints and angels illustrative of his large style and crowded composition. The Brera at Milan can boast of a very characteristic Flagellation, where the nude has been carefully studied, and the brutality of an insolent officer is forcibly represented. But perhaps the most interesting of his works out of Orvieto are those in his native place, Cortona. In the Church of the Gesù, in that town, there is an altar-piece re-

sides, the artists of the sixteenth century eclipsed all their predecessors, and the name of Signorelli has been swallowed up in that of Michael Angelo. Vasari said

presenting Madonna in glory with saints, which also contains on a smaller scale than the principal figures a little design of the Temptation in Eden. You recognize the master's individuality in the muscular and energetic Adam. The Duomo has a Communion of the Apostles which shows Signorelli's independence of tradition. It is the Cenacolo treated with freedom. Christ stands in the midst of the twelve, who are gathered around him, some kneeling and some upright, upon a marble pavement. The whole scene is conceived in a truly grand style—noble attitudes, broad draperies, sombre and rich coloring, masculine massing of the figures in effective groups. The Christ is especially noble. Swaying a little to the right, he gives the bread to a kneeling apostle. The composition is marked by a dignity and self-restraint which Raphael might have envied. San Niccolo, again, has a fine picture by this master. It is a Deposition with saints and angels—those large-limbed and wide-winged messengers of God whom none but Signorelli realized. The composition of this picture is hazardous, and at first sight it is even displeasing. The figures seem roughly scattered in a vacant space. The dead Christ has but little dignity, and the passion of St. Jerome in the foreground is stiff in spite of its exaggeration. But long study only serves to render this strange picture more and more attractive. Especially noticeable is the youthful angel clad in dark green who sustains Christ. He is a young man in the bloom of strength and beauty, whose long golden hair falls on each side of a sublimely lovely face. Nothing in painting surpasses the modelling of the vigorous but delicate left arm stretched forward to support the heavy corpse. This figure is conceived and executed in a style worthy of the Orvietan frescos. Signorelli, for whose imagination angels had a special charm, has shown here that his too frequent contempt for grace was not the result of insensibility to beauty. Strength is the parent of sweetness in this wonderful winged youth. But not a single sacrifice is made in the whole picture to mere elegance. Cortona is a place which, independently of Signorelli, well deserves a visit. Like all Etruscan towns, it is perched on the top of a high hill, whence it commands a wonderful stretch of landscape—Monte Amiata and Montepulciano to the south, Chiusi with its lake, the lake of Thrasymene, and the whole broad Tuscan

that "esso Michel Angelo imitò l'andar di Luca, come può vedere ognuno." Nor is it hard to see that what the one began at Orvieto the other completed in the

plain. The city itself is built on a projecting buttress of the mountain, to which it clings so closely that, in climbing to the terrace of St. Margarita, you lose sight of all but a few towers and house-roofs. One can almost fancy that Signorelli gained his broad and austere style from the habitual contemplation of a view so severe in outline and so vacant in its width. This landscape has none of the variety which distinguishes the prospect from Perugia, none of the suavity of Siena. It is truly sympathetic in its bare simplicity to the style of the great painter of Cortona. Try to see it on a winter morning, when the mists are lying white and low and thin upon the plain, when distant hills rise islanded into the air, and the outlines of lakes are just discernible through fleecy haze. Next to Cortona in importance is the Convent of Monte Oliveto in the neighbourhood of Siena, where Signorelli painted eight frescos from the story of St. Benedict, distinguished by his customary vigor of conception, masculine force of design, and martial splendor in athletic disdainful young men. One scene in this series, representing the interior of a country inn, is specially interesting for a realism not usual in the work of Signorelli. The frescos painted for Petruccio at Siena, one of which is now in the National Gallery, the fresco in the Sistine Chapel, which has suffered sadly from retouching, and the magnificent classical picture called the "School of Pan," executed for Lorenzo de' Medici, and now at Berlin, must not be forgotten, nor yet the church-pictures scattered over Loreto, Arcevia, Città di Castello, Borgo San Sepolcro, Volterra, and other cities of the Tuscan-Umbrian district. Arezzo, it may be added in conclusion, has two altar-pieces of Signorelli's in its Pinacoteca, neither of which add much to our conception of this painter's style. Noticeable as they may be among the works of that period, they prove that his genius was hampered by the narrow and traditional treatment imposed on him in pictures of this kind. Students may be referred to Robert Vischer's *Luca Signorelli*, Leipsic, 1879, for a complete list of the master's works and an exhaustive biography. I have tried to estimate his place in the history of Italian art in my volume on the *Fine Arts*, Renaissance in Italy, part III. I may also mention two able articles by Professor Colvin, published a few years since in the *Cornhill Magazine*.

Vatican. These great men had truly kindred spirits. Both struggled to express their intellectual conceptions in the simplest and most abstract forms. The works of both are distinguished by contempt for adventitious ornaments and for the grace of positive color. Both chose to work in fresco, and selected subjects of the gravest and most elevated character. The study of anatomy and the scientific drawing of the naked body which Luca practised were carried to perfection by Michel Angelo. Sublimity of thought and self-restraint pervade their compositions. He who would understand Buonarroti must first appreciate Signorelli. The latter, it is true, was confined to a narrower circle in his study of the beautiful and the sublime. He had not ascended to that pure idealism, superior to all the accidents of place and time, which is the chief distinction of Michael Angelo's work. At the same time his manner had not suffered from too fervid an enthusiasm for the imperfectly comprehended antique. He painted the life he saw around him, and clothed his men and women in the dress of Italy.

Such reflections, and many more, pass through our mind as we sit and ponder in the chapel, which the daylight has deserted. The country people are still on their knees, still careless of the frescoed forms around them, still praying to Madonna of the Miracles. The service is well-nigh done. The benediction has been given, the organist strikes up his air of Verdi, and the congregation shuffles off, leaving the dimly-lighted chapel for the vast, sonorous, dusky nave. How strange it is to hear that faint strain of a feeble opera sounding where, a short while since, the trumpet-blast of Signorelli's angels seemed to thrill our ears!

## RIMINI.

SIGISMONDO PANDOLFO MALATESTA AND LEO BATTISTA  
ALBERTI.

RIMINI is a city of about eighteen thousand souls, famous for its *Stabilimento de' Bagni* and its antiquities, seated upon the coast of the Adriatic, a little to the southeast of the world-historical Rubicon. It is our duty to mention the baths first among its claims to distinction, since the prosperity and cheerfulness of the little town depend on them in a great measure. But visitors from the North will fly from these, to marvel at the bridge which Augustus built and Tiberius completed, and which still spans the Marecchia with five gigantic arches of white Istrian limestone, as solidly as if it had not borne the tramplings of at least three conquests. The triumphal arch, too, erected in honor of Augustus, is a notable monument of Roman architecture. Broad, ponderous, substantial, tufted here and there with flowering weeds, and surmounted with mediaeval machicolations, proving it to have sometimes stood for city gate or fortress, it contrasts most favorably with the slight and somewhat gimcrack arch of Trajan in the sister city of Ancona. Yet these remains of the imperial pontifices, mighty and interesting as they are, sink into comparative insignificance beside the one great wonder of Rimini, the cathedral remodelled for Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta by Leo

Battista Alberti in 1450. This strange church, one of the earliest extant buildings in which the Neopaganism of the Renaissance showed itself in full force, brings together before our memory two men who might be chosen as typical, in their contrasted characters, of the transitional age which gave them birth.

No one with any tincture of literary knowledge is ignorant of the fame, at least, of the great Malatesta family—the house of the Wrongheads, as they were rightly called by some prevision of their future part in Lombard history. The readers of the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth cantos of the *Inferno* have all heard of

E il mastin vecchio e il nuovo da Verucchio  
Che fecer di Montagna il mal governo,

while the story of Francesca da Polenta, who was wedded to the hunchback Giovanni Malatesta and murdered by him with her lover, Paolo, is known not merely to students of Dante, but to readers of Byron and Leigh Hunt, to admirers of Flaxman, Ary Scheffer, Doré—to all, in fact, who have of art and letters any love.

The history of these Malatesti, from their first establishment under Otho III. as lieutenants for the empire in the Marches of Ancona, down to their final subjugation by the papacy in the age of the Renaissance, is made up of all the vicissitudes which could befall a mediæval Italian despotism. Acquiring an unlawful right over the towns of Rimini, Cesena, Sogliano, Ghiacciuolo, they ruled their petty principalities like tyrants by the help of the Guelf and Ghibelline factions, inclining to the one or the other as it suited their humour or their interest, wrangling among themselves,

transmitting the succession of their dynasty through bastards and by deeds of force, quarrelling with their neighbors the Counts of Urbino, alternately defying and submitting to the papal legates in Romagna, serving as condottieri in the wars of the Visconti and the state of Venice, and by their restlessness and genius for military intrigues contributing in no slight measure to the general disturbance of Italy. The Malatesti were a race of strongly marked character: more, perhaps, than any other house of Italian tyrants, they combined for generations those qualities of the fox and the lion which Machiavelli thought indispensable to a successful despot. Son after son, brother with brother, they continued to be fierce and valiant soldiers, cruel in peace, hardy in war, but treasonable and suspicious in all transactions that could not be settled by the sword. Want of union, with them as with the Baglioni and many other of the minor noble families in Italy, prevented their founding a substantial dynasty. Their power, based on force, was maintained by craft and crime, and transmitted through tortuous channels by intrigue. While false in their dealings with the world at large, they were diabolical in the perfidy with which they treated one another. No feudal custom, no standard of hereditary right, ruled the succession in their family. Theretore the ablest Malatesta for the moment clutched what he could of the domains that owned his house for masters. Partitions among sons or brothers, mutually hostile and suspicious, weakened the whole stock. Yet they were great enough to hold their own for centuries among the many tyrants who infested Lombardy. That the other princely families of Romagna, Emilia, and the March were in the same state of internal discord

and dismemberment was probably one reason why the Malatesti stood their ground so firmly as they did.

So far as Rimini is concerned, the house of Malatesta culminated in Sigismondo Pandolfo, son of Gian Galeazzo Visconti's general, the perfidious Pandolfo. It was he who built the Rocca, or castle of the despots, which stands a little way outside the town, commanding a fair view of Apennine tossed hill-tops and broad Lombard plain, and who remodelled the Cathedral of St. Francis on a plan suggested by the greatest genius of the age. Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta was one of the strangest products of the earlier Renaissance. To enumerate the crimes which he committed within the sphere of his own family, mysterious and inhuman outrages which render the tale of the Cenci credible, would violate the decencies of literature. A thoroughly bestial nature gains thus much with posterity, that its worst qualities must be passed by in silence. It is enough to mention that he murdered three wives in succession,\* Bussoni di Carmagnuola, Guinipera d'Este, and Polissena Sforza, on various pretexts of infidelity, and carved horns upon his own tomb with this fantastic legend underneath:

Porto le corna ch' ognuno le vede,  
E tal le porta che non se lo crede.

He died in wedlock with the beautiful and learned Isotta degli Atti, who had for some time been his mis-

\* His first wife was a daughter of the great general of the Venetians against Francesco Sforza. Whether Sigismondo murdered her, as Sansovino seems to imply in his *Famiglie Illustri*, or whether he only repudiated her after her father's execution on the Piazza di San Marco, admits of doubt. About the questions of Sigismondo's marriage with Isotta there is also some uncertainty. At any rate, she had been some time his mistress before she became his wife.

tress. But, like most of the Malatesti, he left no legitimate offspring. Throughout his life he was distinguished for bravery and cunning, for endurance of fatigue and rapidity of action, for an almost fretful rashness in the execution of his schemes, and for a character terrible in its violence. He was acknowledged as a great general; yet nothing succeeded with him. The long warfare which he carried on against the Duke of Montefeltro ended in his discomfiture. Having begun by defying the Holy See, he was impeached at Rome for heresy, parricide, incest, adultery, rape, and sacrilege, burned in effigy by Pope Pius II., and finally restored to the bosom of the Church, after suffering the despoliation of almost all his territories, in 1463. The occasion on which this fierce and turbulent despiser of laws human and divine was forced to kneel as a penitent before the papal legate in the gorgeous temple dedicated to his own pride, in order that the ban of excommunication might be removed from Rimini, was one of those petty triumphs, interesting chiefly for their picturesqueness, by which the popes confirmed their questionable rights over the cities of Romagna. Sigismondo, shorn of his sovereignty, took the command of the Venetian troops against the Turks in the Morea, and returned in 1465, crowned with laurels, to die at Rimini in the scene of his old splendor.

A very characteristic incident belongs to this last act of his life. Dissolute, treacherous, and inhuman as he was, the tyrant of Rimini had always encouraged literature, and delighted in the society of artists. He who could brook no contradiction from a prince or soldier, allowed the pedantic scholars of the sixteenth

century to dictate to him in matters of taste, and sat with exemplary humility at the feet of Latinists like Porcellio, Basinio, and Trebanio. Valturio, the engineer, and Alberti, the architect, were his familiar friends; and the best hours of his life were spent in conversation with these men. Now that he found himself upon the sacred soil of Greece, he was determined not to return to Italy empty-handed. Should he bring manuscripts or marbles, precious vases or inscriptions in half-legible Greek character? These relics were greedily sought for by the potentates of Italian cities; and no doubt Sigismondo enriched his library with some such treasures. But he obtained a nobler prize —nothing less than the body of a saint of scholarship, the authentic bones of the great Platonist, Gemisthus Pletho.\* These he exhumed from their Greek grave and caused them to be deposited in a stone sarcophagus outside the cathedral of his building in Rimini. The Venetians, when they stole the body of St. Mark from Alexandria, were scarcely more pleased than was Sigismondo with the acquisition of this father of the Neopagan faith. Upon the tomb we still may read this legend: “Jemisthii Bizantii philosophor sua temp principis reliquum Sig. Pan. Mal. Pan. F. belli Pelop adversus Turcor regem Imp ob ingentem eruditorum quo flagrat amorem huc afferendum introque mitendum curavit MCCCCLXVI.” Of the Latinity of the inscription much cannot be said; but it means that “Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, having served as general against the Turks in the Morea, induced by

\* For the place occupied in the evolution of Italian scholarship by this Greek sage, see my *Revival of Learning, Renaissance in Italy*, part II.

the great love with which he burns for all learned men, brought and placed here the remains of Gemistus of Byzantium, the prince of the philosophers of his day."

Sigismondo's portrait, engraved on medals, and sculptured upon every frieze and point of vantage in the Cathedral of Rimini, well denotes the man. His face is seen in profile. The head, which is low and flat above the forehead, rising swiftly backward from the crown, carries a thick bushy shock of hair curling at the ends, such as the Italians call a *zazzera*. The eye is deeply sunk, with long, venomous, flat eyelids, like those which Leonardo gives to his most wicked faces. The nose is long and crooked, curved like a vulture's over a petulant mouth, with lips deliberately pressed together, as though it were necessary to control some nervous twitching. The cheek is broad, and its bone is strongly marked. Looking at these features in repose, we cannot but picture to our fancy what expression they might assume under a sudden fit of fury, when the sinews of the face were contracted with quivering spasms, and the lips writhed in sympathy with knit forehead and wrinkled eyelids.

Allusion has been made to the Cathedral of St. Francis at Rimini, as the great ornament of the town, and the chief monument of Sigismondo's fame. It is here that all the Malatesti lie. Here too is the chapel consecrated to Isotta, "Divæ Isottæ Sacrum;" and the tombs of the Malatesta ladies, "Malatestorum domus heroidum sepulchrum;" and Sigismondo's own grave with the cuckold's horns and scornful epitaph. Nothing but the fact that the church is duly dedicated to

St. Francis, and that its outer shell of classic marble encases an old Gothic edifice, remains to remind us that it is a Christian place of worship.\* It has no sanctity, no spirit of piety. The pride of the tyrant whose legend—"Sigismundus Pandulphus Malatesta Pan. F. Fecit Anno Gratiae MCCCCCL"—occupies every arch and string-course of the architecture, and whose coat-of-arms and portrait in medallion, with his cipher and his emblems of an elephant and a rose, are wrought in every piece of sculptured work throughout the building, seems so to fill this house of prayer that there is no room left for God. Yet the Cathedral of Rimini remains a monument of first-rate importance for all students who seek to penetrate the revived paganism of the fifteenth century. It serves also to bring a far more interesting Italian of that period than the tyrant of Rimini himself before our notice.

In the execution of his design, Sigismondo received the assistance of one of the most remarkable men of this or any other age. Leo Battista Alberti, a scion of the noble Florentine house of that name, born during the exile of his parents, and educated in the Venetian territory, was endowed by nature with aptitudes, faculties, and sensibilities so varied as to deserve the name of universal genius. Italy in the Renaissance period was rich in natures of this sort, to whom nothing that is strange or beautiful seemed unfamiliar, and who, gifted with a kind of divination,

\* The account of this church given by *Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini* (Pii Secundi Comment. 11. 92.) deserves quotation: "Ædificavit tamen nobile templum Arimini in honorem divi Francisci, verum ita gentilibus operibus implevit, ut non tam Christianorum quam infidelium dæmones adorantium templum esse videatur."

penetrated the secrets of the world by sympathy. To Pico della Mirandola, Leonardo da Vinci, and Michel Angelo Buonarroti may be added Leo Battista Alberti. That he achieved less than his great compeers, and that he now exists as the shadow of a mighty name, was the effect of circumstances. He came half a century too early into the world, and worked as a pioneer rather than a settler of the realm which Leonardo ruled as his demesne. Very early in his boyhood Alberti showed the versatility of his talents. The use of arms, the management of horses, music, painting, modelling for sculpture, mathematics, classical and modern literature, physical science as then comprehended, and all the bodily exercises proper to the estate of a young nobleman, were at his command. His biographer asserts that he was never idle, never subject to ennui or fatigue. He used to say that books at times gave him the same pleasure as brilliant jewels or perfumed flowers: hunger and sleep could not keep him from them then. At other times the letters on the page appeared to him like twining and contorted scorpions, so that he preferred to gaze on anything but written scrolls. He would then turn to music or painting, or to the physical sports in which he excelled. The language in which this alternation of passion and disgust for study is expressed bears on it the stamp of Alberti's peculiar temperament, his fervid and imaginative genius, instinct with subtle sympathies and strange repugnances. Flying from his study, he would then betake himself to the open air. No one surpassed him in running, in wrestling, in the force with which he cast his javelin or discharged his arrows. So sure was his aim and so skilful his cast,

that he could fling a farthing from the pavement of the square, and make it ring against a church roof far above. When he chose to jump, he put his feet together and bounded over the shoulders of men standing erect upon the ground. On horseback he maintained perfect equilibrium, and seemed incapable of fatigue. The most restive and vicious animals trembled under him and became like lambs. There was a kind of magnetism in the man. We read, besides these feats of strength and skill, that he took pleasure in climbing mountains, for no other purpose apparently than for the joy of being close to nature.

In this, as in many other of his instincts, Alberti was before his age. To care for the beauties of landscape unadorned by art, and to sympathize with sublime or rugged scenery, was not in the spirit of the Renaissance. Humanity occupied the attention of poets and painters; and the age was yet far distant when the pantheistic feeling for the world should produce the art of Wordsworth and of Turner. Yet a few great natures even then began to comprehend the charm and mystery which the Greeks had imaged in their Pan, the sense of an all-pervasive spirit in wild places, the feeling of a hidden want, the invisible tie which makes man a part of rocks and woods and streams around him. Petrarch had already ascended the summit of Mont Ventoux, to meditate, with an exaltation of the soul he scarcely understood, upon the scene spread at his feet and above his head. Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini delighted in wild places for no mere pleasure of the chase, but for the joy he took in communing with nature. How St. Francis found God in the sun and the air, the water and the stars, we know by his cele-

brated hymn: and of Dante's acute observation every canto of the *Divine Comedy* is witness.

Leo Alberti was touched in spirit by even a deeper and a stranger pathos than any of these men: "In the early spring, when he beheld the meadows and hills covered with flowers, and saw the trees and plants of all kinds bearing promise of fruit, his heart became exceeding sorrowful; and when in autumn he looked on fields heavy with harvest and orchards apple-laden, he felt such grief that many even saw him weep for the sadness of his soul." It would seem that he scarcely understood the source of this sweet trouble; for at such times he compared the sloth and inutility of men with the industry and fertility of nature, as though this were the secret of his melancholy. A poet of our century has noted the same stirring of the spirit, and has striven to account for it:

Tears from the depth of some divine despair  
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,  
In looking on the happy autumn fields,  
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Both Alberti and Tennyson have connected the *mal du pays* of the human soul for that ancient country of its birth, the mild Saturnian earth from which we sprang, with a sense of loss. It is the waste of human energy that affects Alberti; the waste of human life touches the modern poet. Yet both perhaps have scarcely interpreted their own spirit; for is not the true source of tears deeper and more secret? Man is a child of nature in the simplest sense; and the stirrings of the secular breasts that gave him suck, and on which he even now must hang, have potent influences

over his emotions. Of Alberti's extraordinary sensitiveness to all such impressions many curious tales are told. The sight of resplendent jewels, of flowers, and of fair landscapes had the same effect upon his nerves as the sound of the Dorian mood upon the youths whom Pythagoras cured of passion by music. He found in them an anodyne for pain, a restoration from sickness. Like Walt Whitman, who adheres to nature by closer and more vital sympathy than any other poet of the modern world, Alberti felt the charm of excellent old age no less than that of florid youth. "On old men gifted with a noble presence and hale and vigorous, he gazed again and again, and said that he revered in them the delights of nature (*naturæ delitias*)."<sup>1</sup> Beasts and birds and all living creatures moved him to admiration for the grace with which they had been gifted, each in his own kind. It is even said that he composed a funeral oration for a dog which he had loved and which died.

To this sensibility for all fair things in nature, Alberti added the charm of a singularly sweet temper and graceful conversation. The activity of his mind, which was always being exercised on subjects of grave speculation, removed him from the noise and bustle of commonplace society. He was somewhat silent, inclined to solitude, and of a pensive countenance; yet no man found him difficult of access: his courtesy was exquisite, and among familiar friends he was noted for the flashes of a delicate and subtle wit. Collections were made of his apothegms by friends, and some are recorded by his anonymous biographer.\* Their finer

\* Almost all the facts of Alberti's life are to be found in the Latin biography included in Muratori. It has been conjectured,

perfume, as almost always happens with good sayings which do not contain the full pith of a proverb, but owe their force, in part at least, to the personality of their author, and to the happy moment of their production, has evanesced. Here, however, is one which seems still to bear the impress of Alberti's genius: "Gold is the soul of labor, and labor the slave of pleasure." Of women he used to say that their inconstancy was an antidote to their falseness; for if a woman could but persevere in what she undertook, all the fair works of men would be ruined. One of his strongest moral sentences is aimed at envy, from which he suffered much in his own life, and against which he guarded with a curious amount of caution. His own family grudged the distinction which his talents gained for him, and a dark story is told of a secret attempt made by them to assassinate him through his servants. Alberti met these ignoble jealousies with a stately calm and a sweet dignity of demeanor, never condescending to accuse his relatives, never seeking to retaliate, but acting always for the honor of his illustrious house. In the same spirit of generosity he refused to enter into wordy warfare with detractors and calumniators, sparing the reputation even of his worst enemy when chance had placed him in his power. This moderation both of speech and conduct was especially distinguished in an age which tolerated the fierce invectives of Filelfo, and applauded the vindictive courage of Cellini. To money Alberti showed a calm indifference. He committed his property to his friends and not without plausibility, by the last editor of Alberti's complete works, Bonucci, that this Latin life was penned by Alberti himself.

and shared with them in common. Nor was he less careless about vulgar fame, spending far more pains in the invention of machinery and the discovery of laws than in their publication to the world. His service was to knowledge, not to glory. Self-control was another of his eminent qualities. With the natural impetuosity of a large heart, and the vivacity of a trained athlete, he yet never allowed himself to be subdued by anger or by sensual impulses, but took pains to preserve his character unstained and dignified before the eyes of men. A story is told of him which may remind us of Goethe's determination to overcome his giddiness. In his youth his head was singularly sensitive to changes of temperature; but by gradual habituation he brought himself at last to endure the extremes of heat and cold bareheaded. In like manner he had a constitutional disgust for onions and honey, so powerful that the very sight of these things made him sick. Yet by constantly viewing and touching what was disagreeable, he conquered these dislikes; and proved that men have a complete mastery over what is merely instinctive in their nature. His courage corresponded to his splendid physical development. When a boy of fifteen, he severely wounded himself in the foot. The gash had to be probed and then sewn up. Alberti not only bore the pain of this operation without a groan, but helped the surgeon with his own hands; and effected a cure of the fever which succeeded, by the solace of singing to his cithern. For music he had a genius of the rarest order; and in painting he is said to have achieved success. Nothing, however, remains of his work; and from what Vasari says of it, we may fairly conclude that he gave less

care to the execution of finished pictures than to drawings subsidiary to architectural and mechanical designs. His biographer relates that when he had completed a painting, he called children and asked them what it meant. If they did not know, he reckoned it a failure. He was also in the habit of painting from memory. While at Venice, he put on canvas the faces of friends at Florence whom he had not seen for months. That the art of painting was subservient in his estimation to mechanics is indicated by what we hear about the camera, in which he showed landscapes by day and the revolutions of the stars by night, so lively drawn that the spectators were affected with amazement. The semi-scientific impulse to extend man's mastery over nature, the magician's desire to penetrate secrets, which so powerfully influenced the development of Leonardo's genius, seems to have overcome the purely æsthetic instincts of Alberti, so that he became in the end neither a great artist like Raphael, nor a great discoverer like Galileo, but rather a clairvoyant to whom the miracles of nature and of art lie open.

After the first period of youth was over, Leo Battista Alberti devoted his great faculties and all his wealth of genius to the study of the law—then, as now, the quicksand of the noblest natures. The industry with which he applied himself to the civil and ecclesiastical codes broke his health. For recreation he composed a Latin comedy called *Philodoxeos*, which imposed upon the judgment of scholars, and was ascribed as a genuine antique to Lepidus, the comic poet. Feeling stronger, Alberti returned at the age of twenty to his law studies, and pursued them in the teeth of disadvantages. His health was still uncertain,

and the fortune of an exile reduced him to the utmost want. It was no wonder that under these untoward circumstances even his Herculean strength gave way. Emaciated and exhausted, he lost the clearness of his eyesight, and became subject to arterial disturbances, which filled his ears with painful sounds. This nervous illness is not dissimilar to that which Rousseau describes in the confessions of his youth. In vain, however, his physicians warned Alberti of impending peril. A man of so much stanchness, accustomed to control his nature with an iron will, is not ready to accept advice. Alberti persevered in his studies, until at last the very seat of intellect was invaded. His memory began to fail him for names, while he still retained with wonderful accuracy whatever he had seen with his eyes. It was now impossible to think of law as a profession. Yet since he could not live without severe mental exercise, he had recourse to studies which tax the verbal memory less than the intuitive faculties of the reason. Physics and mathematics became his chief resource; and he devoted his energies to literature. His *Treatise on the Family* may be numbered among the best of those compositions on social and speculative subjects in which the Italians of the Renaissance sought to rival Cicero. His essays on the arts are mentioned by Vasari with sincere approbation. Comedies, interludes, orations, dialogues, and poems flowed with abundance from his facile pen. Some were written in Latin, which he commanded more than fairly; some in the Tuscan tongue, of which, owing to the long exile of his family in Lombardy, he is said to have been less a master. It was owing to this youthful illness, from which apparently his constitution never wholly

recovered, that Alberti's genius was directed to architecture.

Through his friendship with Flavio Biondo, the famous Roman antiquary, Alberti received an introduction to Nicholas V. at the time when this, the first great pope of the Renaissance, was engaged in rebuilding the palaces and fortifications of Rome. Nicholas discerned the genius of the man, and employed him as his chief counsellor in all matters of architecture. When the Pope died, he was able, while reciting his long Latin will upon his death-bed, to boast that he had restored the Holy See to its due dignity, and the Eternal City to the splendor worthy of the seat of Christendom. The accomplishment of the second part of his work he owed to the genius of Alberti. After doing thus much for Rome under Thomas of Sarzana, and before beginning to beautify Florence at the instance of the Rucellai family, Alberti entered the service of the Malatesta, and undertook to remodel the Cathedral of St. Francis at Rimini. He found it a plain Gothic structure with apse and side chapels. Such churches are common enough in Italy, where pointed architecture never developed its true character of complexity and richness, but was doomed to the vast vacuity exemplified in St. Petronio of Bologna. He left it a strange medley of mediæval and Renaissance work, a symbol of that dissolving scene in the world's pantomime, when the spirit of classic art, as yet but little comprehended, was encroaching on the early Christian taste. Perhaps the mixture of styles so startling in St. Francesco ought not to be laid to the charge of Alberti, who had to execute the task of turning a Gothic into a classic building. All that he

could do was to alter the whole exterior of the church, by affixing a screen-work of Roman arches and Corinthian pilasters, so as to hide the old design and yet to leave the main features of the fabric, the windows and doors especially, *in statu quo*. With the interior he dealt upon the same general principle, by not disturbing its structure, while he covered every available square inch of surface with decorations alien to the Gothic manner. Externally, St. Francesco is perhaps the most original and graceful of the many attempts made by Italian builders to fuse the mediæval and the classic styles. For Alberti attempted nothing less. A century elapsed before Palladio, approaching the problem from a different point of view, restored the antique in its purity, and erected in the Palazzo della Ragione of Vicenza an almost unique specimen of resuscitated Roman art.

Internally, the beauty of the Church is wholly due to its exquisite wall-ornaments. These consist for the most part of low reliefs in a soft white stone, many of them thrown out upon a blue ground in the style of Della Robbia. Allegorical figures designed with the purity of outline we admire in Botticelli, draperies that Burne Jones might copy, troops of singing boys in the manner of Donatello, great angels traced upon the stone so delicately that they seem to be rather drawn than sculptured, statuettes in niches, personifications of all arts and sciences alternating with half-bestial shapes of satyrs and sea-children—such are the forms that fill the spaces of the chapel walls, and climb the pilasters, and fret the arches, in such abundance that had the whole church been finished as it was designed, it would have presented one splendid though bizarre

effect of incrustation. Heavy screens of Verona marble, emblazoned in open arabesques with the ciphers of Sigismondo and Isotta, with coats-of-arms, emblems, and medallion portraits, shut the chapels from the nave. Who produced all this sculpture it is difficult to say. Some of it is very good; much is indifferent. We may hazard the opinion that, besides Bernardo Ciuffagni, of whom Vasari speaks, some pupils of Donatello and Benedetto da Majano worked at it. The influence of the sculptors of Florence is everywhere perceptible.

Whatever be the merit of these reliefs, there is no doubt that they fairly represent one of the most interesting moments in the history of modern art. Gothic inspiration had failed; the early Tuscan style of the Pisani had been worked out; Michael Angelo was yet far distant, and the abundance of classic models had not overwhelmed originality. The sculptors of the school of Ghiberti and Donatello, who are represented in this church, were essentially pictorial, preferring low to high relief, and relief in general to detached figures. Their style, like the style of Boiardo in poetry, of Botticelli in painting, is specific to Italy in the middle of the fifteenth century. Mediæval standards of taste were giving way to classical, Christian sentiment to Pagan; yet the imitation of the antique had not been carried so far as to efface the spontaneity of the artist, and enough remained of Christian feeling to tinge the fancy with a grave and sweet romance. The sculptor had the skill and mastery to express his slightest shade of thought with freedom, spirit, and precision. Yet his work showed no sign of conventionality, no adherence to prescribed rules. Every outline, every fold of drapery, every attitude, was pregnant, to the

artist's own mind at any rate, with meaning. In spite of its symbolism, what he wrought was never mechanically figurative, but gifted with the independence of its own beauty, vital with an inbreathed spirit of life. It was a happy moment, when art had reached consciousness, and the artist had not yet become self-conscious. The hand and the brain then really worked together for the procreation of new forms of grace, not for the repetition of old models, or for the invention of the strange and startling. "Delicate, sweet, and captivating" are good adjectives to express the effect produced upon the mind by the contemplation even of the average work of this period.

To study the flowing lines of the great angels traced upon the walls of the Chapel of St. Sigismund in the Cathedral of Rimini, to follow the undulations of their drapery that seems to float, to feel the dignified urbanity of all their gestures, is like listening to one of those clear early Italian compositions for the voice, which surpasses in suavity of tone and grace of movement all that Music in her full-grown vigor has produced. There is, indeed, something infinitely charming in the crepuscular moments of the human mind. Whether it be the rath loveliness of an art still immature, or the beauty of art upon the wane—whether, in fact, the twilight be of morning or of evening, we find in the masterpieces of such periods a placid calm and chastened pathos, as of a spirit self-withdrawn from vulgar cares, which in the full light of meridian splendor is lacking. In the Church of St. Francesco at Rimini the tempered clearness of the dawn is just about to broaden into day.

## RAVENNA.

THE Emperor Augustus chose Ravenna for one of his two naval stations, and in course of time a new city arose by the seashore, which received the name of Portus Classis. Between this harbor and the mother city a third town sprang up, and was called Cæsarea. Time and neglect, the ravages of war, and the encroaching powers of Nature, have destroyed these settlements, and nothing now remains of the three cities but Ravenna. It would seem that in classical times Ravenna stood, like modern Venice, in the centre of a huge lagoon, the fresh waters of the Ronco and the Po mixing with the salt waves of the Adriatic round its very walls. The houses of the city were built on piles; canals instead of streets formed the means of communication, and these were always filled with water artificially conducted from the southern estuary of the Po. Round Ravenna extended a vast morass, for the most part under shallow water, but rising at intervals into low islands like the Lido or Murano or Torcello which surround Venice. These islands were celebrated for their fertility: the vines and fig-trees and pomegranates, springing from a fat and fruitful soil, watered with constant moisture, and fostered by a mild sea-wind and liberal sunshine, yielded crops that for luxuriance and quality surpassed the harvests of any orchards on the mainland.

All the conditions of life in old Ravenna seem to have resembled those of modern Venice; the people went about in gondolas, and in the early morning barges laden with fresh fruit or meat and vegetables flocked from all quarters to the city of the sea.\* Water also had to be procured from the neighboring shore, for, as Martial says, a well at Ravenna was more valuable than a vineyard. Again, between the city and the mainland ran a long low causeway all across the lagoon like that on which the trains now glide into Venice. Strange to say, the air of Ravenna was remarkably salubrious: this fact, and the ease of life that prevailed there, and the security afforded by the situation of the town, rendered it a most desirable retreat for the monarchs of Italy during those troublous times in which the empire nodded to its fall. Honorius retired to its lagoons for safety; Odoacer, who de-throned the last Caesar of the West, succeeded him; and was in turn supplanted by Theodoric the Ostrogoth. Ravenna, as we see it now, recalls the peaceful and half-Roman rule of the great Gothic king. His palace, his churches and the mausoleum in which his daughter Amalasuntha laid the hero's bones, have survived the sieges of Belisarius and Astolpus, the conquest of Pepin, the bloody quarrels of iconoclasts with the children of the Roman Church, the mediæval wars of Italy, the victory of Gaston de Foix, and still stand gorgeous with marbles and mosaics in spite of time and the decay of all around them.

As early as the sixth century, the sea had already

\* We may compare with Venice what is known about the ancient Hellenic city of Sybaris. Sybaris and Ravenna were the Greek and Roman Venice of antiquity.

retreated to such a distance from Ravenna that orchards and gardens were cultivated on the spot where once the galleys of the Cæsars rode at anchor. Groves of pines sprang up along the shore, and in their lofty tops the music of the wind moved like the ghost of waves and breakers plunging upon distant sands. This Pinetum stretches along the shore of the Adriatic for about forty miles, forming a belt of variable width between the great marsh and the tumbling sea. From a distance the bare stems and velvet crowns of the pine-trees stand up like palms that cover an oasis on Arabian sands; but at a nearer view the trunks detach themselves from an inferior forest-growth of juniper and thorn and ash and oak, the tall roofs of the stately firs shooting their breadth of sheltering greenery above the lower and less sturdy brushwood. It is hardly possible to imagine a more beautiful and impressive scene than that presented by these long alleys of imperial pines. They grow so thickly one behind another that we might compare them to the pipes of a great organ, or the pillars of a Gothic church, or the basaltic columns of the Giant's Causeway. Their tops are ever green and laden with the heavy cones from which Ravenna draws considerable wealth. Scores of peasants are quartered on the outskirts of the forest, whose business it is to scale the pines and rob them of their fruit at certain seasons of the year. Afterwards they dry the fir-cones in the sun, until the nuts which they contain fall out. The empty husks are sold for fire-wood, and the kernels in their stony shells reserved for exportation. You may see the peasants, men, women, and boys, sorting them by millions, drying and sifting them upon the open

spaces of the wood, and packing them in sacks to send abroad through Italy. The *pinocchi*, or kernels, of the stone-pine are largely used in cookery, and those of Ravenna are prized for their good quality and aromatic flavor. When roasted or pounded, they taste like a softer and more mealy kind of almonds. The task of gathering this harvest is not a little dangerous. They have to cut notches in the straight shafts, and having climbed, often, to the height of eighty feet, to lean upon the branches, and detach the fir-cones with a pole—and this for every tree. Some lives, they say, are yearly lost in the business.

As may be imagined, the spaces of this great forest form the haunt of innumerable living creatures. Lizards run about by myriads in the grass. Doves coo among the branches of the pines, and nightingales pour their full-throated music all day and night from thickets of white-thorn and acacia. The air is sweet with aromatic scents: the resin of the pine and juniper, the may-flowers and acacia-blossoms, the violets that spring by thousands in the moss, the wild roses and faint honeysuckles which throw fragrant arms from bough to bough of ash or maple, join to make one most delicious perfume. And though the air upon the neighboring marsh is poisonous, here it is dry, and spreads a genial health. The sea-wind murmuring through these thickets at nightfall or misty sunrise conveys no fever to the peasants stretched among their flowers. They watch the red rays of sunset flaming through the columns of the leafy hall, and flaring on its fretted rafters of entangled boughs; they see the stars come out, and Hesper gleam, an eye of brightness, among dewy branches; the moon walks silver-

footed on the velvet tree-tops, while they sleep beside the camp-fires; fresh morning wakes them to the sound of birds and scent of thyme and twinkling of dewdrops on the grass around. Meanwhile ague, fever, and death have been stalking all night long about the plain, within a few yards of their couch, and not one pestilential breath has reached the charmed precincts of the forest.

You may ride or drive for miles along green aisles between the pines in perfect solitude; and yet the creatures of the wood, the sunlight and the birds, the flowers and tall majestic columns at your side, prevent all sense of loneliness or fear. Huge oxen haunt the wilderness—gray creatures, with mild eyes and spreading horns and stealthy tread. Some are patriarchs of the forest, the fathers and the mothers of many generations who have been carried from their sides to serve in ploughs or wagons on the Lombard plain. Others are yearling calves, intractable and ignorant of labor. In order to subdue them to the yoke, it is requisite to take them very early from their native glades, or else they chafe and pine away with weariness. Then there is a sullen canal, which flows through the forest from the marshes to the sea; it is alive with frogs and newts and snakes. You may see these serpents basking on the surface among thickets of the flowering rush, or coiled about the lily leaves and flowers—lithe monsters, slippery and speckled, the tyrants of the fen.

It is said that when Dante was living at Ravenna he would spend whole days alone among the forest glades, thinking of Florence and her civil wars, and meditating cantos of his poem. Nor have the influences of the pine wood failed to leave their trace upon his

verse. The charm of its summer solitude seems to have sunk into his soul; for when he describes the whispering of winds and singing birds among the boughs of his terrestrial paradise, he says:

Non però dal lor esser dritto sparte  
Tanto, che gli augelletti per le cime  
Lasciasser d'operare ogni lor arte:  
Ma con piena letizia l'aure prime,  
Cantando, ricevano intra le foglie,  
Che tenevan bordone alle sue rime  
Tal, qual di ramo in ramo si raccoglie  
Per la pineta in sul lito di Chiassi,  
Quand' Eolo Scirocco fuor discioglie.

With these verses in our minds, while wandering down the grassy aisles, beside the waters of the solitary place, we seem to meet that lady singing as she went, and plucking flower by flower, "like Proserpine when Ceres lost a daughter, and she lost her spring." There, too, the vision of the griffin and the car, of singing maidens, and of Beatrice descending to the sound of Benedictus and of falling flowers, her flaming robe and mantle green as grass, and veil of white, and olive crown, all flashed upon the poet's inner eye, and he remembered how he bowed before her when a boy. There is yet another passage in which it is difficult to believe that Dante had not the pine forest in his mind. When Virgil and the poet were waiting in anxiety before the gates of Dis, when the Furies on the wall were tearing their breasts and crying, "Venga Medusa, e si 'l farem di smalto," suddenly across the hideous river came a sound like that which whirlwinds make among the shattered branches and bruised stems of forest trees; and Dante, looking out with fear upon

the foam and spray and vapor of the flood, saw thousands of the damned flying before the face of one who forded Styx with feet unwet. "Like frogs," he says, "they fled, who scurry through the water at the sight of their foe, the serpent, till each squats and hides himself close to the ground." The picture of the storm among the trees might well have occurred to Dante's mind beneath the roof of pine boughs. Nor is there any place in which the simile of the frogs and water-snake attains such dignity and grandeur. I must confess that till I saw the ponds and marshes of Ravenna, I used to fancy that the comparison was somewhat below the greatness of the subject; but there so grave a note of solemnity and desolation is struck, the scale of Nature is so large, and the serpents coiling in and out among the lily leaves and flowers are so much in their right place, that they suggest a scene by no means unworthy of Dante's conception.

Nor is Dante the only singer who has invested this wood with poetical associations. It is well known that Boccaccio laid his story of *Honorius* in the pine forest, and every student of English literature must be familiar with the noble tale in verse which Dryden has founded on this part of the *Decameron*. We all of us have followed Theodore, and watched with him the tempest swelling in the grove, and seen the hapless ghost pursued by demon hounds and hunter down the glades. This story should be read while storms are gathering upon the distant sea, or thunder-clouds descending from the Apennines, and when the pines begin to rock and surge beneath the stress of laboring winds. Then runs the sudden flash of lightning like a rapier through the boughs, the rain

streams hissing down, and the thunder "breaks like a whole sea overhead."

With the Pinetum the name of Byron will be forever associated. During his two years' residence in Ravenna he used to haunt its wilderness, riding alone or in the company of friends. The inscription placed above the entrance to the house he occupied alludes to it as one of the objects which principally attracted the poet to the neighborhood of Ravenna: "Impaziente di visitare Pantica selva, che inspirò già il Divino e Giovanni Boccaccio." We know, however, that a more powerful attraction, in the person of the Countess Guiccioli, maintained his fidelity to "that place of old renown, once in the Adrian Sea, Ravenna."

Between the Bosco, as the people of Ravenna call this pine wood, and the city, the marsh stretches for a distance of about three miles. It is a plain intersected by dikes and ditches, and mapped out into innumerable rice fields. For more than half a year it lies under water, and during the other months exhales a pestilential vapor, which renders it as uninhabitable as the Roman Campagna; yet in spring-time this dreary flat is even beautiful. The young blades of the rice shoot up above the water, delicately green and tender. The ditches are lined with flowering rush and golden flag, while white and yellow lilies sleep in myriads upon the silent pools. Tamarisks wave their pink and silver tresses by the road, and wherever a plot of mossy earth emerges from the marsh, it gleams with purple orchises and flaming marigolds; but the soil beneath is so treacherous and spongy that these splendid blossoms grow like flowers in dreams or fairy stories. You try in vain to pick them; they elude

your grasp, and flourish in security beyond the reach of arm or stick.

Such is the sight of the old town of Classis. Not a vestige of the Roman city remains, not a dwelling or a ruined tower, nothing but the ancient church of S. Apollinare in Classe. Of all desolate buildings this is the most desolate. Not even the deserted grandeur of S. Paolo beyond the walls of Rome can equal it. Its bare round campanile gazes at the sky, which here vaults only sea and plain—a perfect dome, star-spangled like the roof of Galla Placidia's tomb. Ravenna lies low to west, the pine wood stretches away in long monotony to east. There is nothing else to be seen except the spreading marsh, bounded by dim snowy Alps and purple Apennines, so very far away that the level rack of summer clouds seem more attainable and real. What sunsets and sunrises that tower must see; what glaring lurid after-glows in August, when the red light scowls upon the pestilential fen; what sheets of sullen vapor rolling over it in autumn; what breathless heats, and rain-clouds big with thunder; what silences; what unimpeded blasts of winter winds! One old monk tends this deserted spot. He has the huge church, with its echoing aisles and marble columns and giddy bell-tower and cloistered corridors, all to himself. At rare intervals, priests from Ravenna come to sing some special mass at these cold altars; pious folks make vows to pray upon their mouldy steps and kiss the relics which are shown on great occasions. But no one stays; they hurry, after muttering their prayers, from the fever-stricken spot, reserving their domestic pieties and customary devotions for the brighter and newer chapels of the fashion-

able churches in Ravenna. So the old monk is left alone to sweep the marsh water from his church floor, and to keep the green moss from growing too thickly on its monuments. A clammy conferva covers everything except the mosaics upon tribune, roof, and clerestory, which defy the course of age. Christ on his throne *sedet aeternumque sedebit*: the saints around him glitter with their pitiless uncompromising eyes and wooden gestures, as if twelve centuries had not passed over them, and they were nightmares only dreamed last night, and rooted in a sick man's memory. For those gaunt and solemn forms there is no change of life or end of days. No fever touches them; no dampness of the wind and rain loosens their firm cement. They stare with senseless faces in bitter mockery of men who live and die and moulder away beneath. Their poor old guardian told us it was a weary life. He has had the fever three times, and does not hope to survive many more Septembers. The very water that he drinks is brought him from Ravenna; for the vast fen, though it pours its overflow upon the church floor, and spreads like a lake around, is death to drink. The monk had a gentle woman's voice and mild brown eyes. What terrible crime had consigned him to this living tomb? For what past sorrow is he weary of his life? What anguish of remorse has driven him to such a solitude? Yet he looked simple and placid; his melancholy was subdued and calm, as if life were over for him, and he were waiting for death to come with a friend's greeting upon noiseless wings some summer night across the fen-lands in a cloud of soft destructive fever-mist.

Another monument upon the plain is worthy of a

visit. It is the so-called Colonna dei Francesi, a cinquecento pillar of Ionic design, erected on the spot where Gaston de Foix expired victorious after one of the bloodiest battles ever fought. The Ronco, a straight, sluggish stream, flows by the lonely spot; mason-bees have covered with laborious stucco-work the scrolls and leafage of its ornaments, confounding epitaphs and trophies under their mud houses. A few cypress-trees stand round it, and the dogs and chickens of a neighboring farm-yard make it their rendezvous. Those mason-bees are like posterity, which settles down upon the ruins of a Baalbec or a Luxor, setting up its tents and filling the fair spaces of Hellenic or Egyptian temples with clay hovels. Nothing differs but the scale; and while the bees content themselves with filling up and covering, man destroys the silent places of the past which he appropriates.

In Ravenna itself, perhaps what strikes us most is the abrupt transition everywhere discernible from monuments of vast antiquity to buildings of quite modern date. There seems to be no interval between the marbles and mosaics of Justinian or Theodoric and the insignificant frippery of the last century. The churches of Ravenna—S. Vitale, S. Apollinare, and the rest—are too well known and have been too often described by enthusiastic antiquaries, to need a detailed notice in this place. Every one is aware that the ecclesiastical customs and architecture of the early Church can be studied in greater perfection here than elsewhere. Not even the basilicas and mosaics of Rome, nor those of Palermo and Monreale, are equal for historical interest to those of Ravenna. Yet there is not one single church which remains entirely unaltered and unspoiled. The

imagination has to supply the atrium or outer portico from one building, the vaulted baptistery with its marble font from another, the pulpits and ambones from a third, the tribune from a fourth, the round brick bell-tower from a fifth, and then to cover all the concave roofs and chapel walls with grave and glittering mosaics.

There is nothing more beautiful in decorative art than the mosaics of such tiny buildings as the tomb of Galla Placidia or the chapel of the bishop's palace. They are like jewelled and enamelled cases; not an inch of wall can be seen which is not covered with elaborate patterns of the brightest colors. Tall date-palms spring from the floor with fruit and birds among their branches, and between them stand the pillars and apostles of the Church. In the spandrels and lunettes above the arches and the windows angels fly with white, extended wings. On every vacant place are scrolls and arabesques of foliage—birds and beasts, doves drinking from the vase, and peacocks spreading gorgeous plumes—a maze of green and gold and blue. Overhead, the vault is powdered with stars gleaming upon the deepest azure, and in the midst is set an aureole embracing the majestic head of Christ, or else the symbol of the sacred fish, or the hand of the Creator pointing from a cloud. In Galla Placidia's tomb these storied vaults spring above the sarcophagi of empresses and emperors, each lying in the place where he was laid more than twelve centuries ago. The light which struggles through the narrow windows serves to harmonize the brilliant hues and make a gorgeous gloom.

Besides these more general and decorative subjects,

many of the churches are adorned with historical mosaics, setting forth the Bible narrative or incidents from the life of Christian emperors and kings. In S. Apollinare Nuovo there is a most interesting treble series of such mosaics extending over both walls of the nave. On the left hand, as we enter, we see the town of Classis; on the right the palace of Theodoric, its doors and loggie rich with curtains, and its friezes blazing with colored ornaments. From the city gate of Classis virgins issue and proceed in a long line until they reach Madonna seated on a throne with Christ upon her knees and the three kings in adoration at her feet. From Theodoric's palace door a similar procession of saints and martyrs carry us to Christ surrounded by archangels. Above this double row of saints and virgins stand the fathers and prophets of the Church, and highest underneath the roof are pictures from the life of our Lord. It will be remembered in connection with these subjects that the women sat upon the left and the men upon the right side of the church. Above the tribune, at the east end of the church, it was customary to represent the Creative Hand, or the monogram of the Saviour, or the head of Christ with the letters *A* and *Ω*. Moses and Elijah frequently stand on either side to symbolize the transfiguration, while the saints and bishops specially connected with the church appeared upon a lower row. Then on the side walls were depicted such subjects as Justinian and Theodora among their courtiers, or the grant of the privileges of the church to its first founder from imperial patrons, with symbols of the old Hebraic ritual—Abel's lamb, the sacrifice of Isaac, Melchisedec's offering of bread and wine—which were regarded as

the types of Christian ceremonies. The baptistery was adorned with appropriate mosaics representing Christ's baptism in Jordan.

Generally speaking, one is struck with the dignity of these designs, and especially with the combined majesty and sweetness of the face of Christ. The sense for harmony of hue displayed in their composition is marvellous. It would be curious to trace in detail the remnants of classical treatment which may be discerned—Jordan, for instance, pours his water from an urn like a river-god crowned with sedge—or to show what points of ecclesiastical tradition are established by these ancient monuments. We find Mariolatry already imminent, the names of the three kings, Kaspar, Melchior, and Balthazar, the four evangelists as we now recognize them, and many of the rites and vestments which ritualists of all denominations regard with superstitious reverence.

There are two sepulchral monuments in Ravenna which cannot be passed over unnoticed. The one is that of Theodoric the Goth, crowned by its semisphere of solid stone, a mighty tomb, well worthy of the conqueror and king. It stands in a green field, surrounded by acacias, where the nightingales sing ceaselessly in May. The mason-bees have covered it and the water has invaded its sepulchral vaults. In spite of many trials, it seems that human art is unable to pump out the pond and clear the frogs and efts from the chamber where the great Goth was laid by Amalasuntha.

The other is Dante's temple, with its bass-relief and withered garlands. The story of his burial and of the discovery of his real tomb is fresh in the memory of every one. But the "little cupola, more neat than

solemn," of which Lord Byron speaks, will continue to be the goal of many a pilgrimage. For myself—though I remember Chateaubriand's bareheaded genuflection on its threshold, Alfieri's passionate prostration at the altar-tomb, and Byron's offering of poems on the poet's shrine—I confess that a single canto of the *Inferno*, a single passage of the *Vita Nuova*, seems more full of soul-stirring associations than the place where, centuries ago, the mighty dust was laid. It is the spirit that lives and makes alive. And Dante's spirit seems more present with us under the pine branches of the Bosco than beside his real or fancied tomb. "He is risen"—"Lo, I am with you alway"—these are the words that ought to haunt us in a burying-ground. There is something affected and self-conscious in overpowering grief or enthusiasm or humiliation at a tomb.

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## PARMA.

PARMA is perhaps the brightest *Residenzstadt* of the second class in Italy. Built on a sunny and fertile tract of the Lombard plain, within view of the Alps, and close beneath the shelter of the Apennines, it shines like a well-set gem with stately towers and cheerful squares in the midst of verdure. The cities of Lombardy are all like large country-houses: walking out of their gates, you seem to be stepping from a door or window that opens on a trim and beautiful garden, where mulberry-tree is married to mulberry by festoons of vines, and where the maize and sunflower stand together in rows between patches of flax and hemp. But it is not in order to survey the union of well-ordered husbandry with the civilities of ancient city-life that we break the journey at Parma between Milan and Bologna. We are attracted rather by the fame of one great painter, whose work, though it may be studied piecemeal in many galleries of Europe, in Parma has a fulness, largeness, and mastery that can nowhere else be found. In Parma alone Correggio challenges comparison with Raphael, with Tintoretto, with all the supreme decorative painters who have deigned to make their art the handmaid of architecture. Yet even in the cathedral and the church of St. Giovanni, where Correggio's frescos cover cupola and chapel wall, we could scarcely comprehend his great-

ness now—so cruelly have time and neglect dealt with those delicate dream-shadows of celestial fairy-land—were it not for an interpreter who consecrated a life-time to the task of translating his master's poetry of fresco into the prose of engraving. That man was Paolo Toschi—a name to be ever venerated by all lovers of the arts, since without his guidance we should hardly know what to seek for in the ruined splendors of the domes of Parma, or even, seeking, how to find the object of our search. Toschi's labor was more effectual than that of a restorer however skilful, more loving than that of a follower however faithful. He respected Correggio's handiwork with religious scrupulousness, adding not a line or tone or touch of color to the fading frescos; but he lived among them, aloft on scaffoldings, and face to face with the originals which he designed to reproduce. By long and close familiarity, by obstinate and patient interrogation, he divined Correggio's secret, and was able at last to see clearly through the mists of cobweb and mildew and altar smoke, and through the still more cruel travesty of so-called restoration. What he discovered he faithfully committed first to paper in water-colors, and then to copperplate with the burin; so that we enjoy the privilege of seeing Correggio's masterpieces as Toschi saw them, with the eyes of genius and of love and of long scientific study. It is not too much to say that some of Correggio's most charming compositions—for example, the dispute of St. Augustine and St. John—have been resuscitated from the grave by Toschi's skill. The original offers nothing but a mouldering surface from which the painter's work has dropped in scales. The engraving presents a design which we doubt not was Correggio's,

for it corresponds in all particulars to the style and spirit of the master. To be critical in dealing with so successful an achievement of restoration and translation is difficult. Yet it may be admitted once and for all that Toschi has not unfrequently enfeebled his original. Under his touch Correggio loses somewhat of his sensuous audacity, his dithyrambic ecstasy, and approaches the ordinary standard of prettiness and graceful beauty. The Diana of the Camera di S. Paolo, for instance, has the strong calm splendor of a goddess: the same Diana in Toschi's engraving seems about to smile with girlish joy. In a word, the engraver was a man of a more common stamp—more timid and more conventional than the painter. But this is after all a trifling deduction from the value of his work.

Our debt to Paolo Toschi is such that it would be ungrateful not to seek some details of his life. The few that can be gathered even at Parma are brief and bald enough. The newspaper articles and funeral panegyrics which refer to him are as barren as all such occasional notices in Italy have always been, the panegyrist seeming more anxious about his own style than eager to communicate information. Yet a bare outline of Toschi's biography may be supplied. He was born at Parma in 1788. His father was cashier of the post-office, and his mother's name was Anna Maria Brest. Early in his youth he studied painting at Parma under Biagio Martini; and in 1809 he went to Paris, where he learned the art of engraving from Bervic, and of etching from Oortman. In Paris he contracted an intimate friendship with the painter Gérard. But after ten years he returned to Parma, where he established a company and school of en-

gravers in concert with his friend Antonio Isac. Maria Louisa, the then duchess, under whose patronage the arts flourished at Parma (witness Bodoni's exquisite typography), soon recognized his merit, and appointed him Director of the Ducal Academy. He then formed the project of engraving a series of the whole of Correggio's frescos. The undertaking was a vast one. Both the cupolas of St. John and the cathedral, together with the vault of the apse of St. Giovanni\* and various portions of the side aisles, and the so-called Camera di S. Paolo, are covered by frescos of Correggio and his pupil Parmegiano. These frescos have suffered so much from neglect and time, and from unintelligent restoration, that it is difficult in many cases to determine their true character. Yet Toschi did not content himself with selections, or shrink from the task of deciphering and engraving the whole. He formed a school of disciples, among whom were Carlo Raimondi of Milan, Antonio Costa of Venice, Edward Eichens of Berlin, Aloisio Juvara of Naples, Antonio Dalcò, Giuseppe Magnani, and Lodovico Bisola of Parma, and employed them as assistants in his work. Death overtook him in 1854, before it was finished; and now the water-color drawings which are exhibited in the gallery of Parma prove to what extent the achievement fell short of his design. Enough, however, was accomplished to place the chief masterpieces of Correggio beyond the possibility of utter oblivion.

\* The fresco of the Coronation of the Virgin upon the semi-dome of St. Giovanni is the work of a copyist, Cesare Aretusi. But part of the original fresco, which was removed in 1684, exists in a good state of preservation at the end of the long gallery of the library.

To the piety of his pupil Carlo Raimondi, the bearer of a name illustrious in the annals of engraving, we owe a striking portrait of Toschi. The master is represented on his seat upon the scaffold in the dizzy half-light of the dome. The shadowy forms of saints and angels are around him. He has raised his eyes from his cartoon to study one of these. In his right hand is the opera-glass with which he scrutinizes the details of distant groups. The upturned face, with its expression of contemplative intelligence, is like that of an astronomer accustomed to commerce with things above the sphere of common life, and ready to give account of all that he has gathered from his observation of a world not ours. In truth, the world created by Correggio and interpreted by Toschi is very far removed from that of actual existence. No painter has infused a more distinct individuality into his work, realizing by imaginative force and powerful projection an order of beauty peculiar to himself before which it is impossible to remain quite indifferent. We must either admire the manner of Correggio or else shrink from it with the distaste which sensual art is apt to stir in natures of a severe or simple type.

What, then, is the Correggiosity of Correggio? In other words, what is the characteristic which, proceeding from the personality of the artist, is impressed on all his work? The answer to this question, though by no means simple, may, perhaps, be won by a process of gradual analysis. The first thing that strikes us in the art of Correggio is that he has aimed at the realistic representation of pure unrealities. His saints and angels are beings the like of whom we have hardly seen upon the earth. Yet they are displayed

before us with all the movement and the vivid truth of nature. Next we feel that what constitutes the superhuman, visionary quality of these creatures is their uniform beauty of a merely sensuous type. They are all created for pleasure, not for thought or passion or activity or heroism. The uses of their brains, their limbs, their every feature, end in enjoyment; innocent and radiant wantonness is the condition of their whole existence. Correggio conceived the universe under the one mood of sensuous joy: his world was bathed in luxurious light; its inhabitants were capable of little beyond a soft voluptuousness. Over the domain of tragedy he had no sway, and very rarely did he attempt to enter on it: nothing, for example, can be feebler than his endeavor to express anguish in the distorted features of Madonna, St. John, and the Magdalen, who are bending over the dead body of a Christ extended in the attitude of languid repose. In like manner, he could not deal with subjects which demand a pregnancy of intellectual meaning. He paints the three Fates like young and joyous Bacchantes. Place rose-garlands and thyrsi in their hands instead of the distaff and the thread of human destinies, and they might figure appropriately upon the panels of a banquet-chamber in Pompeii. In this respect Correggio might be termed the Rossini of painting. The melodies of the *Stabat Mater*—*Fac ut portem*, or *Quis est homo*—are the exact analogues in music of Correggio's voluptuous renderings of grave or mysterious motives. Nor, again, did he possess that severe and lofty art of composition which subordinates the fancy to the reason, and which seeks for the highest intellectual beauty in a kind of architectural harmony supreme above the

melodies of gracefulness in detail. The Florentines and those who shared their spirit—Michael Angelo and Leonardo and Raphael—deriving this principle of design from the geometrical art of the Middle Ages, converted it to the noblest uses in their vast, well-ordered compositions. But Correggio ignored the laws of scientific construction. It was enough for him to produce a splendid and brilliant effect by the life and movement of his figures and by the intoxicating beauty of his forms. His type of beauty, too, is by no means elevated. Leonardo painted souls whereof the features and the limbs are but an index. The charm of Michael Angelo's ideal is like a flower upon a tree of rugged strength. Raphael aims at the loveliness which cannot be disjoined from goodness. But Correggio is contented with bodies "delicate and desirable." His angels are genii disimprisoned from the perfumed chalices of flowers, houris of an erotic paradise, elemental spirits of nature wantoning in Eden in her prime. To accuse the painter of conscious immorality, or of what is stigmatized as sensuality, would be as ridiculous as to class his seraphic beings among the products of the Christian imagination. They belong to the generation of the fauns. Like fauns, they combine a certain savage wildness, a dithyrambic ecstasy of inspiration, a delight in rapid movement as they revel amid clouds or flowers, with the permanent and all-pervading sweetness of the master's style. When infantine or childlike, these celestial sylphs are scarcely to be distinguished for any noble quality of beauty from Murillo's cherubs, and are far less divine than the choir of children who attend Madonna in Titian's "Assumption." But in their boyhood and their prime

of youth they acquire a fulness of sensuous vitality and a radiance that are peculiar to Correggio. The lily-bearer who helps to support St. Thomas beneath the dome of the cathedral at Parma, the groups of seraphs who crowd behind the Incoronata of St. Giovanni, and the two wild-eyed, open-mouthed St. Johns stationed at each side of the celestial throne are among the most splendid instances of the adolescent loveliness conceived by Correggio. Where the painter found their models may be questioned but not answered; for he has made them of a different fashion from the race of mortals: no court of Roman emperor or Turkish sultan, though stocked with the flowers of Bithynian and Circassian youth, have seen their like. Mozart's Cherubino seems to have sat for all of them. At any rate, they incarnate the very spirit of the songs he sings.

As a consequence of this predilection for sensuous and voluptuous forms, Correggio had no power of imagining grandly or severely. Satisfied with material realism in his treatment even of sublime mysteries, he converts the hosts of heaven into a "fricassee of frogs," according to the old epigram. His apostles, gazing after the Virgin who has left the earth, are thrown into attitudes so violent and so dramatically foreshortened that, seen from below upon the pavement of the cathedral, little of their form is distinguishable except legs and arms in vehement commotion. Very different is Titian's conception of this scene. To express the spiritual meaning, the emotion of Madonna's transit, with all the pomp which color and splendid composition can convey, is Titian's sole care; whereas Correggio appears to have been satisfied with realizing the tumult of heaven rushing to meet earth, and earth

straining upward to ascend to heaven in violent commotion — a very orgasm of frenetic rapture. The essence of the event is forgotten: its external manifestation alone is presented to the eye; and only the accessories of beardless angels and cloud encumbered cherubs are really beautiful amid a surge of limbs in restless movement. More dignified, because designed with more repose, is the *Apocalypse* of St. John painted upon the cupola of St. Giovanni. The apostles throned on clouds, with which the dome is filled, gaze upward to one point. Their attitudes are noble; their form is heroic; in their eyes there is the strange ecstatic look by which Correggio interpreted his sense of supernatural vision: it is a gaze not of contemplation or deep thought, but of wild, half savage joy, as if these saints also had become the elemental genii of cloud and air, spirits emergent from ether, the salamanders of an empyrean intolerable to mortal sense. The point on which their eyes converge, the culmination of their vision, is the figure of Christ. Here all the weakness of Correggio's method is revealed. He had undertaken to realize by no ideal allegorical suggestion, by no symbolism of architectural grouping, but by actual prosaic measurement, by corporeal form in subjection to the laws of perspective and foreshortening, things which in their very essence admit of only a figurative revelation. Therefore his Christ, the centre of all those earnest eyes, is contracted to a shape in which humanity itself is mean, a sprawling figure which irresistibly reminds one of a frog. The clouds on which the saints repose are opaque and solid; cherubs in countless multitudes, a swarm of merry children, crawl about upon these feather beds

of vapor, creep between the legs of the apostles, and play at boopep behind their shoulders. There is no propriety in their appearance there. They take no interest in the beatific vision. They play no part in the celestial symphony; nor are they capable of more than merely infantine enjoyment. Correggio has sprinkled them lavishly like living flowers about his cloud-land, because he could not sustain a grave and solemn strain of music, but was forced by his temperament to overlay the melody with roulades. Gazing at these frescos, the thought came to me that Correggio was like a man listening to sweetest flute-playing, and translating phrase after phrase as they passed through his fancy into laughing faces, breezy tresses, and rolling mists. Sometimes a grander cadence reached his ear; and then St. Peter with the keys, or St. Augustine of the mighty brow, or the inspired eyes of St. John, took form beneath his pencil. But the light airs returned, and rose and lily faces bloomed again for him among the clouds. It is not therefore in dignity or sublimity that Correggio excels, but in artless grace and melodious tenderness. The Madonna della Scala clasping her baby with a caress which the little child returns, St. Catherine leaning in a rapture of ecstatic love to wed the infant Christ, St. Sebastian in the bloom of almost boyish beauty, are the so-called sacred subjects to which the painter was adequate, and which he has treated with the voluptuous tenderness we find in his pictures of Leda and Danae and Io. Could these saints and martyrs descend from Correggio's canvas, and take flesh, and breathe, and begin to live; of what high action, of what grave passion, of what exemplary conduct in any walk of

life would they be capable? That is the question which they irresistibly suggest; and we are forced to answer, None! The moral and religious world did not exist for Correggio. His art was but a way of seeing carnal beauty in a dream that had no true relation to reality.

Correggio's sensibility to light and color was exactly on a par with his feeling for form. He belongs to the poets of chiaroscuro and the poets of coloring; but in both regions he maintains the individuality so strongly expressed in his choice of purely sensuous beauty. Tintoretto makes use of light and shade for investing his great compositions with dramatic intensity. Rembrandt interprets sombre and fantastic moods of the mind by golden gloom and silvery irradiation, translating thought into the language of penumbral mystery. Leonardo studies the laws of light scientifically, so that the proper roundness and effect of distance should be accurately rendered, and all the subtleties of nature's smiles be mimicked. Correggio is content with fixing on his canvas the *ἀνήριθμον γέλισμα*, the many-twinkling laughter of light in motion, rained down through fleecy clouds or trembling foliage, melting into half-shadows, bathing and illuminating every object with a soft caress. There are no tragic contrasts of splendor sharply defined on blackness, no mysteries of half-felt and pervasive twilight, no studied accuracies of noonday clearness in his work. Light and shadow are woven together on his figures like an impalpable Coan gauze, aerial and transparent, enhancing the palpitations of voluptuous movement which he loved. His coloring, in like manner, has none of the superb and mundane pomp which the Venetians affected: it does not glow

or burn or beat the fire of gems into our brain; joyous and wanton, it seems to be exactly such a beauty-bloom as sense requires for its satiety. There is nothing in his hues to provoke deep passion or to stimulate the yearnings of the soul: the pure blushes of the dawn and the crimson pyres of sunset are nowhere in the world that he has painted. But that chord of jocund color which may fitly be married to the smiles of light, the blues which are found in laughing eyes, the pinks that tinge the cheeks of early youth, and the warm yet silvery tones of healthy flesh, mingle as in a marvellous pearl-shell on his pictures. Both chiaroscuro and coloring have this supreme purpose in art, to affect the sense like music, and like music to create a mood in the soul of the spectator. Now the mood which Correggio stimulates is one of natural and thoughtless pleasure. To feel his influence and at the same moment to be the subject of strong passion, or fierce lust, or heroic resolve, or profound contemplation, or pensive melancholy, is impossible. Wantonness, innocent because unconscious of sin, immoral because incapable of any serious purpose, is the quality which prevails in all that he has painted. The pantomimes of a Mohammedan paradise might be put upon the stage after patterns supplied by this least spiritual of painters.

It follows from this analysis that the Correggiosity of Correggio, that which sharply distinguished him from all previous artists, was the faculty of painting a purely voluptuous dream of beautiful beings in perpetual movement, beneath the laughter of morning light, in a world of never-failing April hues. When he attempts to depart from the fairy-land of which he was the Prospero, and to match himself with the

masters of sublime thought or earnest passion, he proves his weakness. But within his own magic circle he reigns supreme, no other artist having blended the witcheries of coloring, chiaroscuro, and faunlike loveliness of form into a harmony so perfect in its sensuous charm. Bewitched by the strains of the siren, we pardon affectations of expression, emptiness of meaning, feebleness of composition, exaggerated and melodramatic attitudes. There is what Goethe calls a dæmonic influence in the art of Correggio: "in poetry," said Goethe to Eckermann, "especially in that which is unconscious, before which reason and understanding fall short, and which therefore produces effects so far surpassing all conception, there is always something dæmonic." It is not to be wondered that Correggio, possessed of this dæmonic power in the highest degree, and working to a purely sensuous end, should have exercised a fatal influence over art. His successors, attracted by an intoxicating loveliness which they could not analyze, which had nothing in common with the reason or the understanding, but was like a glamour cast upon the soul in its most secret sensibilities, threw themselves blindly into the imitation of Correggio's faults. His affectation, his want of earnest thought, his neglect of composition, his sensuous realism, his all-pervading sweetness, his infantine prettiness, his substitution of thaumaturgical effects for conscientious labor, admitted only too easy imitation, and were but too congenial with the spirit of the late Renaissance. Cupolas through the length and breadth of Italy began to be covered with clouds and simpering cherubs in the convulsions of artificial ecstasy. The attenuated elegance of Parmigiano, the attitudinizing of Anselmi's

saints and angels, and a general sacrifice of what is solid and enduring to sentimental gewgaws on the part of all painters who had submitted to the magic of Correggio, proved how easy it was to go astray with the great master. Meanwhile no one could approach him in that which was truly his own—the delineation of a transient moment in the life of sensuous beauty, the painting of a smile on Nature's face, when light and color tremble in harmony with the movement of joyous living creatures. Another dæmonic nature of a far more powerful type contributed his share to the ruin of art in Italy. Michael Angelo's constrained attitudes and muscular anatomy were imitated by painters and sculptors, who thought that the grand style lay in the presentation of theatrical athletes, but who could not seize the secret whereby the great master made even the bodies of men and women—colossal trunks and writhen limbs—interpret the meanings of his deep and melancholy soul.

It is a sad law of progress in art that when the æsthetic impulse is on the wane, artists should perforce select to follow the weakness rather than the vigor of their predecessors. While painting was in the ascendant, Raphael could take the best of Perugino and discard the worst; in its decadence Parmigiano reproduces the affectations of Correggio, and Bernini carries the exaggerations of Michael Angelo to absurdity. All arts describe a parabola. The force which produces them causes them to rise throughout their growth up to a certain point, and then to descend more gradually in a long and slanting line of regular declension. There is no real break of continuity. The end is the result of simple exhaustion. Thus the last of our Elizabethan

dramatists, Shirley and Crowne and Killigrew, pushed to its ultimate conclusion the principle inherent in Marlowe, not attempting to break new ground, nor imitating the excellences so much as the defects of their forerunners. Thus, too, the Pointed style of architecture in England gave birth first to what is called the Decorated, next to the Perpendicular, and finally expired in the Tudor. Each step was a step of progress—at first for the better, at last for the worse—but logical, continuous, necessitated.\*

It is difficult to leave Correggio without at least posing the question of the difference between moralized and merely sensual art. Is all art excellent in itself and good in its effect that is beautiful and earnest? There is no doubt that Correggio's work is in a way most beautiful; and it bears unmistakable signs of the master having given himself with single-hearted devotion to the expression of that phase of loveliness which he could apprehend. In so far we must admit that his art is both excellent and solid. Yet we are unable to conceive that any human being could be made better—stronger for endurance, more fitted for the uses of the world, more sensitive to what is noble in nature—by its contemplation. At the best, Correggio does but please us in our lighter moments, and we are apt to feel that the pleasure he has given is of an enervating kind. To expect obvious morality of any artist is confessedly absurd. It is not the artist's province to preach, or even to teach, except by remote suggestion. Yet the mind of the artist may be highly

\* See the chapter on "Greek Tragedy and Euripides" in my *Greek Poets*, vol. II., for a further development of this view of artistic evolution.

moralized, and then he takes rank not merely with the ministers to refined pleasure, but also with the educators of the world. He may, for example, be penetrated with a just sense of humanity like Shakespeare, or with a sublime temperance like Sophocles, instinct with prophetic intuition like Michael Angelo, or with passionate experience like Beethoven. The mere sight of the work of Pheidias is like breathing pure health-giving air. Milton and Dante were steeped in religious patriotism; Goethe was pervaded with philosophy, and Balzac with scientific curiosity. Ariosto, Cervantes, and even Boccaccio are masters in the mysteries of common life. In all these cases the tone of the artist's mind is felt throughout his work: what he paints or sings or writes conveys a lesson while it pleases. On the other hand, depravity in an artist or a poet percolates through work which has in it nothing positive of evil, and a very miasma of poisonous influence may rise from the apparently innocuous creations of a tainted soul. Now Correggio is moralized in neither way—neither as a good or as a bad man, neither as an acute thinker nor as a deliberate voluptuary. He is simply sensuous. On his own ground he is even very fresh and healthy: his delineation of youthful maternity, for example, is as true as it is beautiful; and his sympathy with the gleefulness of children is devoid of affectation. We have then only to ask ourselves whether the defect in him of all thought and feeling which is not at once capable of graceful fleshly incarnation, be sufficient to lower him in the scale of artists. This question must of course be answered according to our definition of the purposes of art. There is no doubt that the most highly organized art—that which absorbs the most

numerous human qualities and effects a harmony between the most complex elements—is the noblest. Therefore the artist who combines moral elevation and power of thought with a due appreciation of sensual beauty is more elevated and more beneficial than one whose domain is simply that of carnal loveliness. Correggio, if this be so, must take a comparatively low rank. Just as we welcome the beautiful athlete for the radiant life that is in him, but bow before the personality of Sophocles, whose perfect form enshrined a noble and highly educated soul, so we gratefully accept Correggio for his grace, while we approach the consummate art of Michael Angelo with reverent awe. It is necessary in æsthetics, as elsewhere, to recognize a hierarchy of excellence, the grades of which are determined by the greater or less comprehensiveness of the artist's nature expressed in his work. At the same time, the calibre of the artist's genius must be estimated; for eminent greatness, even of a narrow kind, will always command our admiration; and the amount of his originality has also to be taken into account. What is unique has, for that reason alone, a claim on our consideration. Judged in this way, Correggio deserves a place, say, in the sweet planet Venus, above the moon and above Mercury, among the artists who have not advanced beyond the contemplations which find their proper outcome in love. Yet, even thus, he aids the culture of humanity. "We should take care," said Goethe, apropos of Byron, to Eckermann, "not to be always looking for culture in the decidedly pure and moral. Everything that is great promotes cultivation as soon as we are aware of it."

## CANOSSA.

ITALY is less the land of what is venerable in antiquity than of beauty, by divine right young eternally in spite of age. This is due partly to her history and art and literature, partly to the temper of the races who have made her what she is, and partly to her natural advantages. Her oldest architectural remains, the temples of Pæstum and Girgenti, or the gates of Perugia and Volterra, are so adapted to Italian landscape and so graceful in their massive strength, that we forget the centuries which have passed over them. We leap as by a single bound from the times of Roman greatness to the new birth of humanity in the fourteenth century, forgetting the many years during which Italy, like the rest of Europe, was buried in what our ancestors called Gothic barbarism. The illumination cast upon the classic period by the literature of Rome and by the memory of her great men is so vivid that we feel the days of the republic and the empire to be near us; while the Italian Renaissance is so truly a revival of that former splendor, a resumption of the music interrupted for a season, that it is extremely difficult to form any conception of the five long centuries which elapsed between the Lombard invasion in 568 and the accession of Hildebrand to the Pontificate in 1073. So true is it that nothing lives and has reality for us but what is spiritual, intellectual, self-possessed

in personality and consciousness. When the Egyptian priest said to Solon, "You Greeks are always children," he intended a gentle sarcasm, but he implied a compliment; for the quality of imperishable youth belonged to the Hellenic spirit, and has become the heritage of every race which partook of it. And this spirit in no common degree has been shared by the Italians of the earlier and the later classic epoch. The land is full of monuments pertaining to those two brilliant periods; and whenever the voice of poet has spoken or the hand of artist has been at work, that spirit, as distinguished from the spirit of mediævalism, has found expression.

Yet it must be remembered that during the five centuries above-mentioned Italy was given over to Lombards, Franks, and Germans. Feudal institutions, alien to the social and political ideals of the classic world, took a tolerably firm hold on the country. The Latin element remained silent, passive, in abeyance, undergoing an important transformation. It was in the course of those five hundred years that the Italians as a modern people, separable from their Roman ancestors, were formed. At the close of this obscure passage in Italian history, their communes, the foundation of Italy's future independence and the source of her peculiar national development, appeared in all the vigor and audacity of youth. At its close the Italian genius presented Europe with its greatest triumph of constructive ability, the papacy. At its close, again, the series of supreme artistic achievements, starting with the architecture of churches and public palaces, passing on to sculpture and painting, and culminating in music, which only ended with the temporary extinction of national vitality

in the seventeenth century, was simultaneously begun in all the provinces of the peninsula.

So important were these five centuries of incubation for Italy, and so little is there left of them to arrest the attention of the student, dazzled as he is by the ever-living glories of Greece, Rome, and the Renaissance, that a visit to the ruins of Canossa is almost a duty. There, in spite of himself, by the very isolation and forlorn abandonment of what was once so formidable a seat of feudal despotism and ecclesiastical tyranny, he is forced to confront the obscure but mighty spirit of the Middle Ages. There, if anywhere, the men of those iron-hearted times anterior to the Crusades will acquire distinctness for his imagination when he recalls the three main actors in the drama enacted on the summit of Canossa's rock in the bitter winter of 1077.

Canossa lies almost due south of Reggio d'Emilia, upon the slopes of the Apennines. Starting from Reggio, the carriage-road keeps to the plain for some while in a westerly direction, and then bends away towards the mountains. As we approach their spurs the ground begins to rise. The rich Lombard tilth of maize and vine gives place to English-looking hedgerows, lined with oaks, and studded with handsome dark tufts of green hellcbole. The hills descend in melancholy earth-heaps on the plain, crowned here and there with ruined castles. Four of these mediæval strongholds, called Bianello, Montevetro, Monteluzzo, and Montezano, give the name of Quattro Castelli to the commune. The most important of them, Bianello, which, next to Canossa, was the strongest fortress possessed by the Countess Matilda and her ancestors,

still presents a considerable mass of masonry, roofed, and habitable. The group formed a kind of advance-guard for Canossa against attack from Lombardy. After passing Quattro Castelli, we enter the hills, climbing gently upward between barren slopes of ashy gray earth—the débris of most ancient Apennines—crested at favorable points with lonely towers. In truth, the whole country bristles with ruined forts, making it clear that during the Middle Ages Canossa was but the centre of a great military system, the core and kernel of a fortified position which covered an area to be measured by scores of square miles, reaching far into the mountains, and buttressed on the plain. As yet, however, after nearly two hours' driving, Canossa has not come in sight. At last a turn in the road discloses an opening in the valley of the Enza to the left. Up this lateral gorge we see first the Castle of Rossena, on its knoll of solid red rock, flaming in the sunlight; and then, further withdrawn, detached from all surrounding objects, and reared aloft as though to sweep the sea of waved and broken hills around it, a sharp horn of hard white stone. That is Canossa—the *alba Canossa*, the *candida petra* of its rhyming chronicler. There is no mistaking the commanding value of its situation. At the same time the brilliant whiteness of Canossa's rocky hill, contrasted with the red gleam of Rossena, and outlined against the prevailing dulness of these earthy Apennines, secures a picturesque individuality concordant with its unique history and unrivalled strength.

There is still a journey of two hours before the castle can be reached, and this may be performed on foot or horseback. The path winds upward over

broken ground; following the *arête* of curiously jumbled and thwarted hill-slopes; passing beneath the battlements of Rossena, whence the unfortunate Everelina threw herself in order to escape the savage love of her lord and jailer; and then skirting those horrid earthen *balze* which are so common and so unattractive a feature of Apennine scenery. The most hideous *balze* to be found in the length and breadth of Italy are probably those of Volterra, from which the citizens themselves recoil with a kind of terror, and which lure melancholy men by intolerable fascination on to suicide. Forever crumbling, altering with frost and rain, discharging gloomy glaciers of slow-crawling mud, and scarring the hill-side with tracts of barrenness, these earth-precipices are among the most ruinous and uncomfortable failures of nature. They have not even so much of wildness or grandeur as forms the saving merit of nearly all wasteful things in the world, and can only be classed with the desolate *ghiare* of Italian river-beds.

Such as they are, these *balze* form an appropriate preface to the gloomy and repellent isolation of Canossa. The rock towers from a narrow platform to the height of rather more than one hundred and sixty feet from its base. The top is fairly level, forming an irregular triangle, of which the greatest length is about two hundred and sixty feet, and the width about one hundred feet. Scarcely a vestige of any building can be traced either upon the platform or the summit, with the exception of a broken wall and windows supposed to belong to the end of the sixteenth century. The ancient castle, with its triple circuit of walls, enclosing barracks for the garrison, lodgings for the lord and

his retainers, a stately church, a sumptuous monastery, storehouses, stables, workshops, and all the various buildings of a fortified stronghold, have utterly disappeared. The very passage of approach cannot be ascertained; for it is doubtful whether the present irregular path that scales the western face of the rock be really the remains of some old staircase, corresponding to that by which Mont St. Michel in Normandy is ascended. One thing is tolerably certain—that the three walls of which we hear so much from the chroniclers, and which played so picturesque a part in the drama of Henry IV.'s penance, surrounded the cliff at its base, and embraced a large acreage of ground. The citadel itself must have been but the acropolis or keep of an extensive fortress.

There has been plenty of time since the year 1255, when the people of Reggio sacked and destroyed Canossa, for Nature to resume her undisputed sway by obliterating the handiwork of men; and at present Nature forms the chief charm of Canossa. Lying one afternoon of May on the crisp short grass at the edge of a precipice purple with iris in full blossom, I surveyed, from what were once the battlements of Matilda's castle, a prospect than which there is none more spirit-stirring, by reason of its beauty and its manifold associations, in Europe. The lower castle-crowded hills have sunk. Reggio lies at our feet, shut in between the crests of Monte Carboniano and Monte delle Celle. Beyond Reggio stretches Lombardy—the fairest and most memorable battle-field of nations, the richest and most highly cultivated garden of civilized industry. Nearly all the Lombard cities may be seen, some of them faint like bluish films of vapor, some clear with

dome and spire. There is Modena and her Ghirlandina. Carpi, Parma, Mirandola, Verona, Mantua, lie well-defined and russet on the flat green map; and there flashes a bend of lordly Po; and there the Euganeans rise like islands, telling us where Padua and Ferrara nestle in the amethystine haze. Beyond and above all to the northward sweep the Alps, tossing their silvery crests up into the cloudless sky from the violet mist that girds their flanks and drowns their basements. Monte Adamello and the Ortler, the cleft of the Brenner, and the sharp peaks of the Venetian Alps are all distinctly visible. An eagle flying straight from our eyrie might traverse Lombardy and light among the snow-fields of the Valtelline between sunrise and sundown. Nor is the prospect tame to southward. Here the Apennines roll, billow above billow, in majestic desolation, soaring to snow summits in the Pellegrino region. As our eye attempts to thread that labyrinth of hill and vale, we tell ourselves that those roads wind to Tuscany, and yonder stretches Garfagnana, where Ariosto lived and mused in honorable exile from the world he loved.

It was by one of the mountain passes that lead from Lucca northward that the first founder of Canossa is said to have travelled early in the tenth century. Sigifredo, if the tradition may be trusted, was very wealthy; and with his money he bought lands and signorial rights at Reggio, bequeathing to his children, when he died, about 945, a patrimony which they developed into a petty kingdom. Azzo, his second son, fortified Canossa, and made it his principal place of residence. When Lothair, King of Italy, died, in 950, leaving his beautiful widow to the ill-treatment of his

successor, Berenger, Adelaide found a protector in this Azzo. She had been imprisoned on the Lake of Garda; but managing to escape in man's clothes to Mantua, she thence sent news of her misfortunes to Canossa. Azzo lost no time in riding with his knights to her relief, and brought her back in safety to his mountain fastness. It is related that Azzo was afterwards instrumental in calling Otho into Italy and procuring his marriage with Adelaide, in consequence of which events Italy became a fief of the Empire. Owing to the part he played at this time, the Lord of Canossa was recognized as one of the most powerful vassals of the German emperor in Lombardy. Honors were heaped upon him; and he grew so rich and formidable that Berenger, the titular King of Italy, laid siege to his fortress of Canossa. The memory of this siege, which lasted for three years and a half, is said still to linger in the popular traditions of the place. When Azzo died, at the end of the tenth century, he left to his son Tedaldo the title of Count of Reggio and Modena; and this title was soon after raised to that of Marquis. The Marches governed as Vicar of the Empire by Tedaldo included Reggio, Modena, Ferrara, Brescia, and probably Mantua. They stretched, in fact, across the north of Italy, forming a quadrilateral between the Alps and Apennines. Like his father, Tedaldo adhered consistently to the imperial party; and when he died and was buried at Canossa, he in his turn bequeathed to his son Bonifazio a power and jurisdiction increased by his own abilities. Bonifazio held the state of a sovereign at Canossa, adding the Duchy of Tuscany to his father's fiefs, and meeting the allied forces of the Lombard barons in the field of Coviole

like an independent potentate. His power and splendor were great enough to rouse the jealousy of the emperor; but Henry III. seems to have thought it more prudent to propitiate this proud vassal, and to secure his kindness, than to attempt his humiliation. Bonifazio married Beatrice, daughter of Frederick, Duke of Lorraine —her whose marble sarcophagus in the Campo Santo at Pisa is said to have inspired Niccola Pisano with his new style of sculpture. Their only child, Matilda, was born, probably at Lucca, in 1046; and six years after her birth, Bonifazio, who had swayed his subjects like an iron-handed tyrant, was murdered. To the great house of Canossa, the rulers of one third of Italy, there now remained only two women, Bonifazio's widow, Beatrice, and his daughter, Matilda. Beatrice married Godfrey, Duke of Lorraine, who was recognized by Henry IV. as her husband and as feudatory of the empire in the full place of Boniface. He died about 1070; and in this year Matilda was married by proxy to his son, Godfrey the Hunchback, whom, however, she did not see till the year 1072. The marriage was not a happy one; and the question has even been disputed among Matilda's biographers whether it was ever consummated. At any rate, it did not last long; for Godfrey was killed at Antwerp in 1076. In this year Matilda also lost her mother, Beatrice, who died at Pisa, and was buried in the cathedral.

By this rapid enumeration of events it will be seen how the power and honors of the house of Canossa, including Tuscany, Spoleto, and the fairest portions of Lombardy, had devolved upon a single woman of the age of thirty at the moment when the fierce quarrel between pope and emperor began in the year 1076.

Matilda was destined to play a great, a striking, and a tragic part in the opening drama of Italian history. Her decided character and uncompromising course of action have won for her the name of "la gran donna d'Italia," and have caused her memory to be blessed or execrated, according as the temporal pretensions and spiritual tyranny of the papacy may have found supporters or opponents in posterity. She was reared from childhood in habits of austerity and unquestioning piety. Submission to the Church became for her not merely a rule of conduct, but a passionate enthusiasm. She identified herself with the cause of four successive popes, protected her idol, the terrible and iron-hearted Hildebrand, in the time of his adversity; remained faithful to his principles after his death; and having served the Holy See with all her force and all that she possessed through all her lifetime, she bequeathed her vast dominions to it on her death-bed. Like some of the greatest mediæval characters—like Hildebrand himself—Matilda was so thoroughly of one piece that she towers above the mists of ages with the massive grandeur of an incarnated idea. She is for us the living statue of a single thought, an undivided impulse, the more than woman born to represent her age. Nor was it without reason that Dante symbolized in her the love of Holy Church; though students of the *Purgatory* will hardly recognize the lovely maiden, singing and plucking flowers beside the stream of Lethe, in the stern and warlike chatelaine of Canossa. Unfortunately we know but little of Matilda's personal appearance. Her health was not strong; and it is said to have been weakened, especially in her last illness, by ascetic observances.

Yet she headed her own troops, armed with sword and cuirass, avoiding neither peril nor fatigue in the quarrels of her master, Gregory. Up to the year 1622 two strong suits of mail were preserved at Quattro Castelli, which were said to have been worn by her in battle, and which were afterwards sold on the market-place at Reggio. This habit of donning armor does not, however, prove that Matilda was exceptionally vigorous; for in those savage times she could hardly have played the part of heroine without participating personally in the dangers of warfare.

No less monumental in the plastic unity of his character was the monk Hildebrand, who for twenty years before his elevation to the papacy had been the maker of popes and the creator of the policy of Rome. When he was himself elected in the year 1073, and had assumed the name of Gregory VII., he immediately began to put in practice the plans for Church aggrandizement he had slowly matured during the previous quarter of a century. To free the Church from its subservience to the Empire; to assert the Pope's right to ratify the election of the emperor and to exercise jurisdiction over him; to place ecclesiastical appointments in the sole power of the Roman See; and to render the celibacy of the clergy obligatory, were the points he had resolved to carry. Taken singly and together, these chief aims of Hildebrand's policy had but one object—the magnification of the Church at the expense both of the people and of secular authorities, and the further separation of the Church from the ties and sympathies of common life that bound it to humanity. To accuse Hildebrand of personal ambition would be but shallow criticism, though

it is clear that his inflexible and puissant nature found a savage selfish pleasure in trampling upon power and humbling pride at warfare with his own. Yet his was in no sense an egotistic purpose, like that which moved the popes of the Renaissance to dismember Italy for their bastards. Hildebrand, like Matilda, was himself the creature of a great idea. These two potent personalities completely understood each other, and worked towards a single end. The mythopœic fancy might conceive of them as the male and female manifestations of one dominant faculty, the spirit of ecclesiastical dominion incarnate in a man and woman of almost superhuman mould.

Opposed to them, as the third actor in the drama of Canossa, was a man of feebler mould. Henry IV., King of Italy, but not yet crowned emperor, had none of his opponents' unity of purpose or monumental dignity of character. At war with his German feudatories, browbeaten by rebellious sons, unfaithful and cruel to his wife, vacillating in the measures he adopted to meet his divers difficulties, at one time tormented by his conscience into cowardly submission, and at another treasonably neglectful of the most solemn obligations, Henry was no match for the stern wills against which he was destined to break in unavailing passion. Early disagreements with Gregory had culminated in his excommunication. The German nobles abandoned his cause; and Henry found it expedient to summon a council in Augsburg for the settlement of matters in dispute between the empire and the papacy. Gregory expressed his willingness to attend this council, and set forth from Rome accompanied by the Countess Matilda in December, 1076. He did not, however,

travel farther than Vercelli, for news here reached him that Henry was about to enter Italy at the head of a powerful army. Matilda hereupon persuaded the Holy Father to place himself in safety among her strongholds of Canossa. Thither accordingly Gregory retired before the ending of that year; and bitter were the sarcasms uttered by the imperial partisans in Italy upon this protection offered by a fair countess to the monk who had been made a pope. The foul calumnies of that bygone age would be unworthy of even so much as this notice, if we did not trace in them the ineradicable Italian tendency to cynical insinuation—a tendency which has involved the history of the Renaissance popes in an almost impenetrable mist of lies and exaggerations.

Henry was in truth upon his road to Italy, but with a very different attendance from that which Gregory expected. Accompanied by Bertha, his wife, and his boy son Conrad, the emperor elect left Spires in the condition of a fugitive, crossed Burgundy, spent Christmas at Besançon, and journeyed to the foot of Mont Cenis. It is said that he was followed by a single male servant of mean birth; and if the tale of his adventures during the passage of the Alps can be credited, history presents fewer spectacles more picturesque than the straits to which this representative of the Cæsars, this supreme chief of feudal civility, this ruler destined still to be the leader of mighty armies and the father of a line of monarchs, was exposed. Concealing his real name and state, he induced some shepherds to lead him and his escort through the thick snows to the summit of Mont Cenis; and by the help of these men the imperial party were afterwards let down the

snow-slopes on the farther side by means of ropes. Bertha and her women were sewn up in hides and dragged across the frozen surface of the winter drifts. It was a year memorable for its severity. Heavy snow had fallen in October, which continued ice-bound and unyielding till the following April.

No sooner had Henry reached Turin than he set forward again in the direction of Canossa. The fame of his arrival preceded him, and he found that his party was far stronger in Italy than he had ventured to expect. Proximity to the Church of Rome divests its fulminations of half their terrors. The Italian bishops and barons, less superstitious than the Germans, and with greater reason to resent the domineering graspingness of Gregory, were ready to espouse the emperor's cause. Henry gathered a formidable force as he marched onward across Lombardy; and some of the most illustrious prelates and nobles of the South were in his suite. A more determined leader than Henry proved himself to be might possibly have forced Gregory to some accommodation, in spite of the strength of Canossa and the Pope's invincible obstinacy, by proper use of these supporters. Meanwhile the adherents of the Church were mustered in Matilda's fortress; among whom may be mentioned Azzo, the progenitor of Este and Brunswick; Hugo, Abbot of Clugny; and the princely family of Piedmont. "I am become a second Rome," exclaims Canossa, in the language of Matilda's rhyming chronicler; "all honors are mine; I hold at once both pope and king, the princes of Italy and those of Gaul, those of Rome, and those from far beyond the Alps." The stage was ready; the audience had assembled; and now the three great actors were

about to meet. Immediately upon his arrival at Canossa, Henry sent for his cousin, the Countess Matilda, and besought her to intercede for him with Gregory. He was prepared to make any concessions or to undergo any humiliations if only the ban of excommunication might be removed; nor, cowed as he was by his own superstitious conscience, and by the memory of the opposition he had met with from his German vassals, does he seem to have once thought of meeting force with force, and of returning to his Northern kingdom triumphant in the overthrow of Gregory's pride. Matilda undertook to plead his cause before the Pontiff. But Gregory was not to be moved so soon to mercy. "If Henry has in truth repented," he replied, "let him lay down crown and sceptre and declare himself unworthy of the name of king." The only point conceded to the suppliant was that he should be admitted in the garb of a penitent within the precincts of the castle. Leaving his retinue outside the walls, Henry entered the first series of outworks, and was thence conducted to the second, so that between him and the citadel itself there still remained the third of the surrounding bastions. Here he was bidden to wait the Pope's pleasure; and here, in the midst of that bitter winter weather, while the fierce winds of the Apennines were sweeping sleet upon him in their passage from Monte Pellegrino to the plain, he knelt barefoot, clothed in sack-cloth, fasting from dawn till eve, for three whole days. On the morning of the fourth day, judging that Gregory was inexorable, and that his suit would not be granted, Henry retired to the Chapel of St. Nicholas, which stood within this second precinct. There he called to his aid the Abbot of Clugny and the countess,

both of whom were his relations, and who, much as they might sympathize with Gregory, could hardly be supposed to look with satisfaction on their royal kinsman's outrage. The abbot told Henry that nothing in the world could move the Pope; but Matilda, when in turn he fell before her knees and wept, engaged to do for him the utmost. She probably knew that the moment for unbending had arrived, and that her imperious guest could not with either decency or prudence prolong the outrage offered to the civil chief of Christendom. It was the 25th of January when the emperor elect was brought, half dead with cold and misery, into the Pope's presence. There he prostrated himself in the dust, crying aloud for pardon. It is said that Gregory first placed his foot upon Henry's neck, uttering these words of Scripture: "Super aspidem et basiliscum ambulabis, et conculcabis leonem et draconem," and that then he raised him from the earth and formally pronounced his pardon. The prelates and nobles who took part in this scene were compelled to guarantee with their own oaths the vows of obedience pronounced by Henry; so that in the very act of reconciliation a new insult was offered to him. After this Gregory said mass, and permitted Henry to communicate; and at the close of the day a banquet was served, at which the king sat down to meat with the Pope and the countess.

It is probable that, while Henry's penance was performed in the castle courts beneath the rock, his reception by the Pope, and all that subsequently happened, took place in the citadel itself. But of this we have no positive information. Indeed, the silence of the chronicles as to the topography of Canossa is pe-

culiarly unfortunate for lovers of the picturesque in historic detail, now that there is no possibility of tracing the outlines of the ancient building. Had the author of the *Vita Mathildis* (Muratori, vol. v.) foreseen that his beloved Canossa would one day be nothing but a mass of native rock, he would undoubtedly have been more explicit on these points, and much that is vague about an event only paralleled by our Henry II.'s penance before Becket's shrine at Canterbury might now be clear.

Very little remains to be told about Canossa. During the same year—1077—Matilda made the celebrated donation of her fiefs to Holy Church. This was accepted by Gregory in the name of St. Peter, and it was confirmed by a second deed during the pontificate of Urban IV., in 1102. Though Matilda subsequently married Guelfo d'Este, son of the Duke of Bavaria, she was speedily divorced from him; nor was there any heir to a marriage ridiculous by reason of disparity of age, the bridegroom being but eighteen, while the bride was forty-three in the year of her second nuptials. During one of Henry's descents into Italy, he made an unsuccessful attack upon Canossa, assailing it at the head of a considerable force one October morning in 1092. Matilda's biographer informs us that the mists of autumn veiled his beloved fortress from the eyes of the beleaguerers. They had not even the satisfaction of beholding the unvanquished citadel; and, what was more, the banner of the emperor was seized and dedicated as a trophy in the Church of S. Apollonio. In the following year the countess opened her gates of Canossa to an illustrious fugitive, Adelaide, the wife of her old foeman, Henry,

who had escaped with difficulty from the insults and the cruelty of her husband. After Henry's death, his son, the Emperor Henry V., paid Matilda a visit in her castle of Bianello, addressed her by the name of mother, and conferred upon her the vice-regency of Liguria. At the age of sixty-nine she died, in 1115, at Bondeno de' Roncori, and was buried, not among her kinsmen at Canossa, but in an abbey of St. Benedict near Mantua. With her expired the main line of the noble house she represented; though Canossa, now made a fief of the empire in spite of Matilda's donation, was given to a family which claimed descent from Bonifazio's brother Conrad, a young man killed in the battle of Coviolo. This family, in its turn, was extinguished in the year 1570; but a junior branch still exists at Verona. It will be remembered that Michel Angelo Buonarroti claimed kinship with the Count of Canossa; and a letter from the count is extant acknowledging the validity of his pretension.

As far back as 1255 the people of Reggio destroyed the castle; nor did the nobles of Canossa distinguish themselves in subsequent history among those families who based their despotisms on the débris of the imperial power in Lombardy. It seemed destined that Canossa and all belonging to it should remain as a mere name and memory of the outgrown Middle Ages. Estensi, Carraresi, Visconti, Bentivogli, and Gonzaghi belong to a later period of Lombard history, and mark the dawn of the Renaissance.

As I lay and mused that afternoon of May upon the short grass, cropped by two gray goats whom a little boy was tending, it occurred to me to ask the woman who had served me as guide whether any

legend remained in the country concerning the Countess Matilda. She had often, probably, been asked this question by other travellers. Therefore she was more than usually ready with an answer, which, as far as I could understand her dialect, was this: Matilda was a great and potent witch, whose summons the devil was bound to obey. One day she aspired, alone of all her sex, to say mass; but when the moment came for sacring the elements a thunderbolt fell from the clear sky and reduced her to ashes.\* That the most single-hearted handmaid of the Holy Church, whose life was one long devotion to its ordinances, should survive in this grotesque myth, might serve to point a satire upon the vanity of earthly fame. The legend in its very extravagance is a fanciful distortion of the truth.

\* I find that this story is common in the country round Canossa. It is mentioned by Professor A. Ferretti in his monograph entitled *Canossa, Studi e Ricerche* (Reggio, 1876), a work to which I am indebted, and which will repay careful study.

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## CREMA AND THE CRUCIFIX.

FEW people visit Crema. It is a little country town of Lombardy, between Cremona and Treviglio, with no historic memories but very misty ones belonging to the days of the Visconti dynasty. On every side around the city walls stretch smiling vineyards and rich meadows, where the elms are married to the mulberry-trees by long festoons of foliage hiding purple grapes, where the sunflowers droop their heavy golden heads among tall stems of millet and gigantic maize, and here and there a ricecrop ripens in the marshy loam. In vintage time the carts, drawn by their white oxen, come creaking toward in the evening, laden with blue bunches. Down the long straight roads, between rows of poplars, they creep on; and on the shafts beneath the pyramid of fruit lie contadini stained with lees of wine. Far off across that "waveless sea" of Lombardy, which has been the battle-field of countless generations, rise the dim, gray Alps, or else pearled domes of thunder-clouds in gleaming masses over some tall solitary tower. Such backgrounds, full of peace, suggestive of almost infinite distance, and dignified with colors of incomparable depth and breadth, the Venetian painters loved. No landscape in Europe is more wonderful than this—thrice wonderful in the vastness of its arching heavens, in the stillness of its level plain, and in the bulwark of huge

crested mountains, reared afar like bastions against the northern sky.

The little town is all alive in this September weather. At every corner of the street, under rustling abeles and thick-foliaged planes, at the doors of palaces and in the yards of inns, men, naked from the thighs downward, are treading the red must into vats and tuns; while their mild-eyed oxen lie beneath them in the road, peaceably chewing the cud between one journey to the vineyard and another. It must not be imagined that the scene of Alma Tadema's "Roman Vintage," or what we fondly picture to our fancy of the Athenian Lenæa, is repeated in the streets of Crema. This modern treading of the wine-press is a very prosaic affair. The town reeks with a sour smell of old casks and crushed grape-skins, and the men and women at work bear no resemblance whatever to Bacchus and his crew. Yet even as it is, the Lombard vintage, beneath floods of sunlight and a pure blue sky, is beautiful; and he who would fain make acquaintance with Crema, should time his entry into the old town, if possible, on some still, golden afternoon of autumn. It is then, if ever, that he will learn to love the glowing brickwork of its churches and the quaint terra-cotta traceries that form its chief artistic charm.

How the unique brick architecture of the Lombard cities took its origin—whether from the precepts of Byzantine aliens in the earliest Middle Ages, or from the native instincts of a mixed race composed of Gallic, Ligurian, Roman, and Teutonic elements, under the leadership of Longobardic rulers—is a question for antiquarians to decide. There can, however, be

no doubt that the monuments of the Lombard style, as they now exist, are no less genuinely local, no less characteristic of the country they adorn, no less indigenous to the soil they sprang from, than the Attic colonnades of Mnesicles and Ictinus. What the marble quarries of Pentelicus were to the Athenian builders, the clay beneath their feet was to those Lombard craftsmen. From it they fashioned structures as enduring, towers as majestic, and cathedral aisles as solemn as were ever wrought from chiselled stone. There is a true sympathy between those buildings and the Lombard landscape, which by itself might suffice to prove the originality of their almost unknown architects. The rich color of the baked clay—finely modulated from a purplish red, through russet, crimson, pink, and orange, to pale yellow and dull gray—harmonizes with the brilliant greenery of Lombard vegetation and with the deep azure of the distant Alpine range. Reared aloft above the flat expanse of plain, those square *torroni*, tapering into octagons and crowned with slender cones, break the long sweeping lines and infinite horizons with a contrast that affords relief, and yields a resting-place to tired eyes; while, far away, seen haply from some bridge above Ticino, or some high-built palace loggia, they gleam like columns of pale rosy fire against the front of mustering storm-clouds blue with rain. In that happy orchard of Italy, a pergola of vines in leaf, a clump of green acacias, and a campanile soaring above its church roof, brought into chance combination with the reaches of the plain and the dim mountain-range, make up a picture eloquent in its suggestive beauty.

Those ancient builders wrought cunningly with

their material. The bricks are fashioned and fixed to last for all time. Exposed to the icy winds of a Lombard winter, to the fierce fire of a Lombard summer, and to the moist vapors of a Lombard autumn; neglected by unheeding generations; with flowers clustering in their crannies, and birds nesting in their eaves, and mason-bees filling the delicate network of their traceries—they still present angles as sharp as when they were but finished, and joints as nice as when the mortar dried in the first months of their building. This immunity from age and injury they owe partly to the imperishable nature of baked clay; partly to the care of the artists who selected and mingled the right sorts of earth, burned them with scrupulous attention, and fitted them together with a patience born of loving service. Each member of the edifice was designed with a view to its ultimate place. The proper curve was ascertained for cylindrical columns and for rounded arches. Larger bricks were moulded for the supporting walls, and lesser pieces were adapted to the airy vaults and lanterns. In the brickfield and the kiln the whole church was planned and wrought out in its details, before the hands that made a unity of all these scattered elements were set to the work of raising it in air. When they came to put the puzzle together, they laid each brick against its neighbor, filling up the almost imperceptible interstices with liquid cement composed of quicklime and fine sand in water. After five centuries the seams between the layers of bricks that make the bell-tower of S. Gottardo at Milan yield no point of vantage to the penknife or the chisel.

Nor was it in their welding of the bricks alone

that these craftsmen showed their science. They were wont to enrich the surface with marble, sparingly but effectively employed --as in those slender detached columns which add such beauty to the octagon of S. Gottardo, or in the string-courses of strange beasts and reptiles that adorn the church-fronts of Pavia. They called to their aid the *mandorlato* of Verona, supporting their porch pillars on the backs of couchant lions, inserting polished slabs on their façades, and building huge sarcophagi into their cloister alleys. Between terra-cotta and this marble of Verona there exists a deep and delicate affinity. It took the name of *mandorlato*, I suppose, from a resemblance to almond blossoms. But it is far from having the simple beauty of a single hue. Like all noble veined stones, it passes by a series of modulations and gradations through a gamut of associated rather than contrasted tints. Not the pink of the almond blossom only, but the creamy whiteness of the almond kernel and the dull yellow of the almond nut may be found in it; and yet these colors are so blended and blurred to all-pervading mellowness, that nowhere is there any shock of contrast or violence of a preponderating tone. The veins which run in labyrinths of crossing, curving, and contorted lines all over its smooth surface add, no doubt, to this effect of unity. The polish, lastly, which it takes, makes the *mandorlato* shine like a smile upon the sober face of the brickwork; for, serviceable as terra-cotta is for nearly all artistic purposes, it cannot reflect light or gain the illumination which comes from surface brightness.

What the clay can do almost better than any crystalline material, may be seen in the mouldings so

characteristic of Lombard architecture. Geometrical patterns of the rarest and most fanciful device; scrolls of acanthus-foliage, and traceries of tendrils; Cupids swinging in festoons of vines; angels joining hands in dance, with fluttering skirts and windy hair, and mouths that symbol singing; grave faces of old men and beautiful profiles of maidens leaning from medallions; wide-winged genii filling the spandrels of cloister arches, and cherubs clustered in the rondure of rose-windows—ornaments like these, wrought from the plastic clay, and adapted with true taste of the requirements of the architecture, are familiar to every one who has studied the church-front of Crema, the cloisters of the Certosa, the courts of the Ospedale Maggiore at Milan, or the public palace of Cremona.

If the *mandorlato* give a smile to those majestic Lombard buildings, the terra-cotta decorations add the element of life and movement. The thought of the artist in its first freshness and vivacity is felt in them. They have all the spontaneity of improvisation, the seductive melody of unpremeditated music. Moulding the supple earth with “hand obedient to the brain,” the *plasticatore* has impressed his most fugitive dreams of beauty on it without effort; and what it cost him but a few fatigueless hours to fashion, the steady heat of the furnace has gifted with imperishable life. Such work, no doubt, has the defects of its qualities. As there are few difficulties to overcome, it suffers from a fatal facility—*nec pluteum cœdit nec demorsos sapit unguis*. It is, therefore, apt to be unequal, touching at times the highest point of inspiration, as in the angels of Guccio at Perugia, and sinking not unfrequently into the commonplace of

easy-going triviality, as in the common floral traceries of Milanese windows. But it is never labored, never pedantic, never dulled by the painful effort to subdue an obstinate material to the artist's will. If marble is required to develop the strength of the few supreme sculptors, terra-cotta saves intact the fancies of a crowd of lesser men.

When we reflect that all the force, solemnity, and beauty of the Lombard buildings was evoked from clay, we learn from them this lesson: that the thought of man needs neither precious material nor yet stubborn substance for the production of enduring masterpieces. The red earth was enough for God when he made man in his own image; and mud dried in the sun suffices for the artist, who is next to God in his creative faculty—since *non merita nome di creatore se non Iddio ed il poeta*. After all, what is more everlasting than terra-cotta? The hobnails of the boys who ran across the brickfields in the Roman town of Silchester may still be seen, mingled with the impress of the feet of dogs and hoofs of goats, in the tiles discovered there. Such traces might serve as a metaphor for the footfall of artistic genius, when the form-giver has stamped his thought upon the moist clay, and fire has made that imprint permanent.

Of all these Lombard edifices, none is more beautiful than the Cathedral of Crema, with its delicately finished campanile, built of choicely tinted yellow bricks, and ending in a lantern of the gracefulest, most airily capricious fancy. This bell-tower does not display the gigantic force of Cremona's famous *torrazzo*, shooting three hundred and ninety-six feet into blue ether from the city square; nor can it rival the

octagon of S. Gottardo for warmth of hue. Yet it has a character of elegance, combined with boldness of invention, that justifies the citizens of Crema in their pride. It is unique; and he who has not seen it does not know the whole resources of the Lombard style. The façade of the cathedral displays that peculiar blending of Byzantine or Romanesque round arches with Gothic details in the windows, and with the acute angle of the central pitch which forms the characteristic quality of the late *trecento* Lombard manner. In its combination of purity and richness it corresponds to the best age of decorated work in English Gothic. What, however, strikes a Northern observer is the strange detachment of this elaborate façade from the main structure of the church. Like a frontispiece cut out of cardboard and pierced with ornamental openings, it shoots far above the low roof of the nave; so that at night the moon, rising above the southern aisle, shines through its topmost window, and casts the shadow of its tracery upon the pavement of the square. This is a constructive blemish to which the Italians in no part of the peninsula were sensitive. They seem to have regarded their church-fronts as independent of the edifice, capable of separate treatment, and worthy in themselves of being made the subject of decorative skill.

In the so-called Santuario of Crema—a circular church dedicated to S. Maria della Croce, outside the walls—the Lombard style has been adapted to the manner of the Mid Renaissance. This church was raised in the last years of the fifteenth century by Gian Battista Battagli, an architect of Lodi, who followed the pure rules of taste bequeathed to North

Italian builders by Bramante. The beauty of the edifice is due entirely to its tranquil dignity and harmony of parts, the lightness of its circling loggia, and the just proportion maintained between the central structure and the four projecting porticos. The sharp angles of these vestibules afford a contrast to the simplicity of the main building, while their clustered cupolas assist the general effect of roundness aimed at by the architect. Such a church as this proves how much may be achieved by the happy distribution of architectural masses. It was the triumph of the best Renaissance style to attain lucidity of treatment, and to produce beauty by geometrical proportion. When Leo Battista Alberti complained to his friend, Matteo di Bastia, that a slight alteration of the curves in his design for S. Francesco at Rimini would "spoil his music," *ciò che tu muti discorda tutta quella musica*, this is what he meant. The melody of lines and the harmony of parts made a symphony to his eyes no less agreeable than a concert of tuned lutes and voices to his ears; and to this concord he was so sensitive that any deviation was a discord.

After visiting the church of Crema and sauntering about the streets awhile, there is nothing left to do but to take refuge in the old Albergo del Pozzo. This is one of those queer Italian inns which carry you away at once into a scene of Goldoni. It is part of some palace where nobles housed their *bravi* in the sixteenth century, and which the lesser people of to-day have turned into a dozen habitations. Its great stone staircase leads to a saloon upon which the various bedchambers open; and round its court-yard runs an open balcony, and from the court grows up a fig-tree,

poking ripe fruit against a bedroom window. Oleanders in tubs and red salvias in pots, and kitchen herbs in boxes flourish on the pavement, where the hostler comes to wash his carriages, and where the barber shaves the poodle of the house. Visitors to the Albergo del Pozzo are invariably asked if they have seen the Museo; and when they answer in the negative, they are conducted with some ceremony to a large room on the ground-floor of the inn looking out upon the court-yard and the fig-tree. It was here that I gained the acquaintance of Signor Folcioni and became possessor of an object that has made the memory of Crema doubly interesting to me ever since.

When we entered the Museo we found a little old man, gentle, grave, and unobtrusive, varnishing the ugly portrait of some signor of the Cinque Cento. Round the walls hung pictures of mediocre value in dingy frames, but all of them bore sounding titles. Titians, Leonardos, Guido Renis, and Luinis looked down and waited for a purchaser. In truth this museum was a *bric-à-brac* shop of a sort that is common enough in Italy, where treasures of old lace, glass, armor, furniture, and tapestry may still be met with. Signor Folcioni began by pointing out the merits of his pictures; and after making due allowance for his zeal as amateur and dealer, it was possible to join in some of his eulogiums. A would-be Titian, for instance, bought in Verona from a noble house in ruins, showed Venetian wealth of color in its gemmy greens and lucid crimsons shining from a background deep and glowing. Then he led us to a walnut-wood bureau of late Renaissance work, profusely carved with nymphs and Cupids, and armed men, among festoons of fruits

embossed in high relief. Deeply drilled worm-holes set a seal of antiquity upon the blooming faces and luxuriant garlands, like the touch of Time who "delves the parallels in beauty's brow." On the shelves of an ebony cabinet close by he showed us a row of cups cut out of rock-crystal and mounted in gilt silver, with heaps of engraved gems, old snuff-boxes, coins, medals, sprays of coral, and all the indescribable lumber that one age flings aside as worthless for the next to pick up from the dust-heap and regard as precious. Surely the genius of culture in our century might be compared to a *chiffonnier* of Paris, who, when the night has fallen, goes into the streets, bag on back and lantern in hand, to rake up the waifs and strays a day of whirling life has left him.

The next curiosity was an ivory carving of St. Anthony preaching to the fishes, so fine and small you held it on your palm and used a lens to look at it. Yet there stood the Santo gesticulating, and there were the fishes in rows—the little fishes first, and then the middle-sized, and last of all the great big fishes, almost out at sea, with their heads above the water and their mouths wide open, just as the *Fioretti di Francesco* describes them. After this came some original drawings of doubtful interest, and then a case of fifty-two *nielli*. These were of unquestionable value; for has not Ciconnara engraved them on a page of his classic monograph? The thin silver plates, over which once passed the burin of Maso Finiguerra, cutting lines finer than hairs, and setting here a shadow in dull acid-eaten gray, and there a high light of exquisite polish, were far more delicate than any proofs impressed from them. These frail masterpieces of Florentine art—the

first beginnings of line engraving—we held in our hands while Signor Folcioni read out Cicognara's commentary in a slow, impressive voice, breaking off now and then to point at the originals before us.

The sun had set, and the room was almost dark, when he laid his book down, and said, "I have not much left to show—yet stay! Here are still some little things of interest." He then opened the door into his bedroom and took down from a nail above his bed a wooden crucifix. Few things have fascinated me more than this crucifix—produced without parade, half negligently, from the dregs of his collection by a dealer in old curiosities at Crema. The cross was, or *is*—for it is lying on the table now before me—twenty-one inches in length, made of strong wood, covered with coarse yellow parchment, and shod at the four ends with brass. The Christ is roughly hewn in reddish wood, colored scarlet where the blood streams from the five wounds. Over the head an oval medallion, nailed into the cross, serves as frame-work to a miniature of the Madonna, softly smiling with a Correggiesque simper. The whole crucifix is not a work of art, but such as may be found in every convent. Its date cannot be earlier than the beginning of the eighteenth century. As I held it in my hand, I thought perhaps this has been carried to the bedside of the sick and dying; preachers have brandished it from the pulpit over conscience-stricken congregations; monks have knelt before it on the brick floor of their cells, and novices have kissed it in the vain desire to drown their yearnings after the relinquished world; perhaps it has attended criminals to the scaffold, and heard the secrets of repentant murderers; but why should it be

shown me as a thing of rarity? These thoughts passed through my mind, while Signor Folcioni quietly remarked, "I bought this cross from the Frati when their convent was dissolved in Crema." Then he bade me turn it round, and showed a little steel knob fixed into the back between the arms. This was a spring. He pressed it, and the upper and lower parts of the cross came asunder; and, holding the top like a handle, I drew out as from a scabbard a sharp steel blade, concealed in the thickness of the wood behind the very body of the agonizing Christ. What had been a crucifix became a deadly poniard in my grasp, and the rust upon it in the twilight looked like blood. "I have often wondered," said Signor Folcioni, "that the Frati cared to sell me this."

There is no need to raise the question of the genuineness of this strange relic—though I confess to having had my doubts about it—or to wonder for what nefarious purposes the impious weapon was designed—whether the blade was inserted by some rascal monk who never told the tale, or whether it was used on secret service by the friars. On its surface the infernal engine carries a dark certainty of treason, sacrilege, and violence. Yet it would be wrong to incriminate the Order of St. Francis by any suspicion, and idle to seek the actual history of this mysterious weapon. A writer of fiction could, indeed, produce some dark tale in the style of De Stendhal's *nouvelles*, and christen it "The Crucifix of Crema." And how delighted would Webster have been if he had chanced to hear of such a sword-sheath! He might have placed it in the hands of Bosola for the keener torment of his duchess. Flamineo might have used it; or the disguised friars

who made the death-bed of Bracciano hideous might have plunged it in the duke's heart after mocking his eyes with the figure of the suffering Christ. To imagine such an instrument of moral terror mingled with material violence lay within the scope of Webster's sinister and powerful genius. But unless he had seen it with his eyes, what poet would have ventured to devise the thing and display it even in the dumb show of a tragedy? Fact is more wonderful than romance. No apocalypse of Antichrist matches what is told of Roderigo Borgia; and the crucifix of Crema exceeds the sombre fantasy of Webster.

Whatever may be the truth about this cross, it has at any rate the value of a symbol or a metaphor. The idea which it materializes, the historical events of which it is a sign, may well arrest attention. A sword concealed in the crucifix! What emblem brings more forcibly to mind than this that two edged glaive of persecution which Dominic unsheathed to mow down the populations of Provence and to make Spain destitute of men? Looking upon the crucifix of Crema, we may seem to see pestilence stricken multitudes of Moors and Jews dying on the coasts of Africa and Italy. The Spaniards enter Mexico, and this is the cross they carry in their hands. They take possession of Peru, and while the gentle people of the Incas come to kiss the bleeding brows of Christ they plunge this dagger in their sides. What, again, was the temporal power of the Papacy but a sword imbedded in a cross? Each Papa R $\delta$ , when he ascended the Holy Chair, was forced to take the crucifix of Crema and to bear it till his death. A long procession of war-loving pontiffs, levying armies and paying captains

with the pence of St. Peter, in order to keep by arms the lands they had acquired by fraud, desiles before our eyes. First goes the terrible Sixtus IV., who died of grief when news was brought him that the Italian princes had made peace. He it was who sanctioned the conspiracy to murder the Medici in church at the moment of the elevation of the Host. The brigands hired to do this work refused at the last moment. The sacrilege appalled them. "Then," says the chronicler, "was found a priest who, being used to churches, had no scruple." The poniard this priest carried was this crucifix of Crema. After Sixtus came the blood-stained Borgia; and after him Julius II., whom the Romans in triumphal songs proclaimed a second Mars, and who turned, as Michael Angelo expressed it, the chalices of Rome into swords and helms. Leo X., who dismembered Italy for his brother and nephew; and Clement VII., who broke the neck of Florence and delivered the Eternal City to the spoiler, follow. Of the antinomy between the vicariate of Christ and an earthly kingdom incarnated by these and other holy fathers, what symbol could be found more fitting than a dagger with a crucifix for case and covering?

It is not easy to think or write of these matters without rhetoric. When I laid my head upon my pillow that night in the Albergo del Pozzo at Crema it was full of such thoughts; and when at last sleep came, it brought with it a dream begotten doubtless by the perturbation of my fancy. For I thought that a brown Franciscan, with hollow cheeks and eyes aflame beneath his heavy cowl, sat by my bedside, and, as he raised the crucifix in his lean, quivering hands, whispered a tale of deadly passion and of dastardly re-

venge. His confession carried me away to a convent garden of Palermo; and there was love in the story, and hate that is stronger than love, and, for the ending of the whole matter, remorse which dies not even in the grave. Each new possessor of the crucifix of Crema, he told me, was forced to hear from him in dreams his dreadful history. But, since it was a dream and nothing more, why should I repeat it? I have wandered far enough already from the vintage and the sunny churches of the little Lombard town.

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### MONTE GENEROSO.

THE long, hot days of Italian summer were settling down on plain and country when, in the last week of May, we travelled northward from Florence and Bologna seeking coolness. That was very hard to find in Lombardy. The days were long and sultry, the nights short, without a respite from the heat. Milan seemed a furnace, though in the Duomo and the narrow shady streets there was a twilight darkness which at least looked cool. Long may it be before the Northern spirit of improvement has taught the Italians to despise the wisdom of their forefathers, who built those sombre streets of palaces with overhanging eaves, that, almost meeting, form a shelter from the fiercest sun. The lake country was even worse than the towns; the sunlight lay all day asleep upon the shining waters, and no breeze came to stir their surface or to lift the tepid

veil of haze, through which the stony mountains, with their yet unmelted patches of winter snow, glared as if in mockery of coolness.

Then we heard of a new inn, which had just been built by an enterprising Italian doctor below the very top of Monte Generoso. There was a picture of it in the hotel at Cadenabbia, but this gave but little idea of any particular beauty. A big square house, with many windows, and the usual ladies on mules, and guides with alpenstocks, advancing towards it, and some round bushes growing near, was all it showed. Yet there hung the real Monte Generoso above our heads, and we thought it must be cooler on its height than by the lake-shore. To find coolness was the great point with us just then. Moreover, some one talked of the wonderful plants that grew among its rocks, and of its grassy slopes enamelled with such flowers as make our cottage-gardens at home gay in summer, not to speak of others rarer and peculiar to the region of the Southern Alps. Indeed, the Generoso has a name for flowers, and it deserves it, as we presently found.

This mountain is fitted by its position for commanding one of the finest views in the whole range of the Lombard Alps. A glance at the map shows that. Standing out pre-eminent among the chain of lower hills to which it belongs, the lakes of Lugano and Como with their long arms enclose it on three sides, while on the fourth the plain of Lombardy with its many cities, its rich pasture-lands and corn-fields intersected by winding river-courses and straight interminable roads, advances to its very foot. No place could be better chosen for surveying that contrasted scene of plain and mountain which forms the great attraction

of the outlying buttresses of the central Alpine mass. The superiority of the Monte Generoso to any of the similar eminences on the northern outskirts of Switzerland is great. In richness of color, in picturesqueness of suggestion, in sublimity and breadth of prospect, its advantages are incontestable. The reasons for this superiority are obvious. On the Italian side the transition from mountain to plain is far more abrupt; the atmosphere being clearer, a larger sweep of distance is within our vision; again, the sunlight blazes all day long upon the very front and forehead of the distant Alpine chain, instead of merely slanting along it, as it does upon the northern side.

From Mendrisio, the village at the foot of the mountain, an easy mule-path leads to the hotel, winding first through English-looking hollow lanes with real hedges, which are rare in this country, and English primroses beneath them. Then comes a forest region of luxuriant chestnut-trees, giants with pink boles just bursting into late leafage, yellow and tender, but too thin as yet for shade. A little higher up, the chestnuts are displaced by wild laburnums bending under their weight of flowers. The graceful branches meet above our heads, sweeping their long tassels against our faces as we ride beneath them, while the air for a good mile is full of fragrance. It is strange to be reminded in this blooming labyrinth of the dusty suburb roads and villa gardens of London. The laburnum is pleasant enough in St. John's Wood or the Regent's Park in May—a tame domesticated thing of brightness amid smoke and dust. But it is another joy to see it flourishing in its own home, clothing acres of the mountain-side in a very splendor of spring-color, ming-

ling its paler blossoms with the golden broom of our own hills, and with the silver of the hawthorn and wild cherry. Deep beds of lilies-of-the-valley grow everywhere beneath the trees; and in the meadows purple columbines, white asphodels, the Alpine spiræa, tall, with feathery leaves, blue scabius, golden hawkweeds, turkscap lilies, and, better than all, the exquisite narcissus poeticus, with its crimson-tipped cup, and the pure pale lilies of San Bruno are crowded in a maze of dazzling brightness. Higher up the laburnums disappear, and flaunting crimson peonies gleam here and there upon the rocks, until at length the gentians and white ranunculus of the higher Alps displace the less hardy flowers of Italy.

About an hour below the summit of the mountain we came upon the inn, a large clean building, with scanty furniture and snowy wooden floors, guiltless of carpets. It is big enough to hold about a hundred guests; and Dr. Pasta, who built it, a native of Mendrisio, was gifted either with much faith or with a real prophetic instinct.\* Anyhow he deserves commendation for his spirit of enterprise. As yet the house is little known to English travellers: it is mostly frequented by Italians from Milan, Novara, and other cities of the plain, who call it the Italian Righi, and come to it, as cockneys go to Richmond, for noisy picnic excursions, or at most for a few weeks' *villeggiata*.

\* It is but just to Dr. Pasta to remark that the above sentence was written more than ten years ago. Since then he has enlarged and improved his house in many ways, furnished it more luxuriously, made paths through the beechwoods round it, and brought excellent water at a great cost from a spring near the summit of the mountain. A more charming residence from early spring to late autumn can scarcely be discovered.

*tura* in the summer heats. When we were there in May the season had scarcely begun, and the only inmates besides ourselves were a large party from Milan, ladies and gentlemen in holiday guise, who came, stayed one night, climbed the peak at sunrise, and departed amid jokes and shouting and half-childish play, very unlike the doings of a similar party in sober England. After that the stillness of nature descended on the mountain, and the sun shone day after day upon that great view which seemed created only for ourselves. And what a view it was! The plain, stretching up to the high horizon, where a misty range of pink cirrus-clouds alone marked the line where earth ended and the sky began, was islanded with cities and villages innumerable, basking in the hazy shimmering heat. Milan, seen through the doctor's telescope, displayed its Duomo perfect as a microscopic shell, with all its exquisite fret-work, and Napoleon's arch of triumph surmounted by the four tiny horses, as in a fairy's dream. Far off, long silver lines marked the lazy course of Po and Ticino, while little lakes like Varese and the lower end of Maggiore spread themselves out, connecting the mountains with the plain.

Five minutes' walk from the hotel brought us to a ridge where the precipice fell suddenly and almost sheer over one arm of Lugano Lake. Sullenly outstretched asleep it lay beneath us, colored with the tints of fluor-spar, or with the changeful green and azure of a peacock's breast. The depth appeared immeasurable. San Salvadore had receded into insignificance; the houses and churches and villas of Lugano bordered the lake-shore with an uneven line of whiteness. And over all there rested a blue mist of twilight

and of haze, contrasting with the clearness of the peaks above. It was sunset when we first came here; and, wave beyond wave, the purple Italian hills tossed their crested summits to the foot of a range of stormy clouds that shrouded the high Alps. Behind the clouds was sunset, clear and golden; but the mountains had put on their mantle for the night, and the hem of their garment was all we were to see. And yet—over the edge of the topmost ridge of cloud, what was that long hard line of black, too solid and immovable for cloud, rising into four sharp needles clear and well defined? Surely it must be the familiar outline of Monte Rosa itself, the form which every one who loves the Alps knows well by heart, which picture-lovers know from Ruskin's woodcut in the *Modern Painters*. For a moment only the vision stayed: then clouds swept over it again, and from the place where the empress of the Alps had been a pillar of mist shaped like an angel's wing, purple and tipped with gold, shot up against the pale green sky. That cloud-world was a pageant in itself, as grand and more gorgeous perhaps than the mountains would have been. Deep down through the hollows of the Simplon a thunderstorm was driving; and we saw forked flashes once and again, as in a distant world, lighting up the valleys for a moment, and leaving the darkness blacker behind them as the storm blurred out the landscape forty miles away. Darkness was coming to us too, though our sky was clear and the stars were shining brightly. At our feet the earth was folding itself to sleep; the plain was wholly lost; little islands of white mist had formed themselves, and settled down upon the lakes and on their marshy estuaries; the birds were hushed; the

gentian-cups were filling to the brim with dew. Night had descended on the mountain and the plain; the show was over.

The dawn was whitening in the east next morning when we again scrambled through the dwarf beech-wood to the precipice above the lake. Like an ink-blot it lay, unruffled, slumbering sadly. Broad sheets of vapor brooded on the plain, telling of miasma and fever, of which we on the mountain, in the pure cool air, knew nothing. The Alps were all there now—cold, unreal, stretching like a phantom line of snowy peaks from the sharp pyramids of Monte Viso and the Grivola in the west to the distant Bernina and the Ortler in the east. Supreme among them towered Monte Rosa—queenly, triumphant, gazing down in proud pre-eminence, as she does when seen from any point of the Italian plain. There is no mountain like her. Mont Blanc himself is scarcely so regal; and she seems to know it, for even the clouds sweep humbled round her base, girdling her at most, but leaving her crown clear and free. Now, however, there were no clouds to be seen in all the sky. The mountains had a strange unshaven look, as if waiting to be blessed. Above them, in the cold gray air, hung a low black arch of shadow, the shadow of the bulk of the huge earth, which still concealed the sun. Slowly, slowly this dark line sank lower, till, one by one, at last, the peaks caught first a pale pink flush; then a sudden golden glory flashed from one to the other, as they leaped joyfully into life. It is a supreme moment this first burst of life and light over the sleeping world, as one can only see it on rare days and in rare places like the Monte Generoso. The earth—enough of it at

least for us to picture to ourselves the whole—lies at our feet; and we feel as the Saviour might have felt, when from the top of that high mountain he beheld the kingdoms of the world and all the glory of them. Strangely and solemnly may we imagine to our fancy the lives that are being lived down in those cities of the plain: how many are waking at this very moment to toil and a painful weariness, to sorrow, or to “that unrest which men miscall delight;” while we upon our mountain buttress, suspended in mid-heaven and for a while removed from daily cares, are drinking in the beauty of the world that God has made so fair and wonderful. From this same eyrie, only a few years ago, the hostile armies of France, Italy, and Austria might have been watched moving in dim masses across the plains, for the possession of which they were to clash in mortal fight at Solferino and Magenta. All is peaceful now. It is hard to picture the waving corn-fields trodden down, the burning villages and ransacked vineyards, all the horrors of real war to which that fertile plain has been so often the prey. But now these memories of

“Old, unhappy, far-off things,  
And battles long ago,”

do but add a calm and beauty to the radiant scene that lies before us. And the thoughts which it suggests, the images with which it stores our mind, are not without their noblest uses. The glory of the world sinks deeper into our shallow souls than we well know; and the spirit of its splendor is always ready to revisit us on dark and dreary days at home with an unspeakable refreshment. Even as I write, I seem to see the golden glow sweeping in broad waves over the

purple hills nearer and nearer, till the lake brightens at our feet, and the windows of Lugano flash with sunlight, and little boats creep forth across the water like spiders on a pond, leaving an arrowy track of light upon the green behind them, while Monte Salvadore with its tiny chapel and a patch of the further landscape are still kept in darkness by the shadow of the Generoso itself. The birds wake into song as the sun's light comes; cuckoo answers cuckoo from ridge to ridge; dogs bark; and even the sounds of human life rise up to us: children's voices and the murmurs of the market-place ascending faintly from the many villages hidden among the chestnut-trees beneath our feet; while the creaking of a cart we can but just see slowly crawling along the straight road by the lake is heard at intervals.

The full beauty of the sunrise is but brief. Already the low lakelike mists we saw last night have risen and spread, and shaken themselves out into masses of summer clouds, which, floating upward, threaten to envelop us upon our vantage-ground. Meanwhile they form a changeful sea below, blotting out the plain, surging up into the valleys with the movement of a billowy tide, attacking the lower heights like the advance-guard of a besieging army, but daring not as yet to invade the cold and solemn solitudes of the snowy Alps. These, too, in time, when the sun's heat has grown strongest, will be folded in their midday pall of sheltering vapor.

The very summit of Monte Generoso must not be left without a word of notice. The path to it is as easy as the sheep-walks on an English down, though cut along grass-slopes descending at a perilously sharp

angle. At the top the view is much the same, as far as the grand features go, as that which is commanded from the cliff by the hotel. But the rocks here are crowded with rare Alpine flowers—delicate golden auriculas with powdery leaves and stems, pale yellow cowslips, imperial purple saxifrages, soldanellas at the edge of lingering patches of the winter snow, blue gentians, crocuses, and the frail, rosy-tipped ranunculus, called *glacialis*. Their blooming time is brief. When summer comes the mountain will be bare and burned, like all Italian hills. The Generoso is a very dry mountain, silent and solemn from its want of streams. There is no sound of falling waters on its crags; no musical rivulets flow down its sides, led carefully along the slopes, as in Switzerland, by the peasants, to keep their hay-crops green and gladden the thirsty turf throughout the heat and drought of summer. The soil is a Jurassic limestone: the rain penetrates the porous rock, and sinks through cracks and fissures, to reappear above the base of the mountain in a full-grown stream. This is a defect in the Generoso, as much to be regretted as the want of shade upon its higher pastures. Here, as elsewhere in Piedmont, the forests are cut for charcoal: the beech-scrub, which covers large tracts of the hills, never having the chance of growing into trees much higher than a man. It is this which makes an Italian mountain at a distance look woolly, like a sheep's back. Among the brushwood, however, lilies-of-the-valley and Solomon's-seals delight to grow; and the league-long beds of wild strawberries prove that when the laburnums have faded the mountain will become a garden of feasting.

It was on the crest of Monte Generoso, late one afternoon in May, that we saw a sight of great beauty. The sun had yet about an hour before it sank behind the peaks of Monte Rosa, and the sky was clear, except for a few white clouds that floated across the plain of Lombardy. Then as we sat upon the crags, tufted with soldanellas and auriculas, we could see a fleecy vapor gliding upward from the hollows of the mountain, very thin and pale, yet dense enough to blot the landscape to the south and east from sight. It rose with an imperceptible motion, as the Oceanides might have soared from the sea to comfort Prometheus in the tragedy of *Æschylus*. Already the sun had touched its upper edge with gold, and we were expecting to be enveloped in a mist; when suddenly upon the outspread sheet before us there appeared two forms, larger than life, yet not gigantic, surrounded with halos of such tempered iridescence as the moon half hidden by a summer cloud is wont to make. They were the glorified figures of ourselves; and what we did the phantoms mocked, rising or bowing, or spreading wide their arms. Some scarce-felt breeze prevented the vapor from passing across the ridge to westward, though it still rose from beneath, and kept fading away into thin air above our heads. Therefore the vision lasted as long as the sun stayed yet above the Alps; and the images with their aureoles shrank and dilated with the undulations of the mist. I could not but think of that old formula for an anthropomorphic deity—"the Brocken-spectre of the human spirit projected on the mists of the Non-ego." Even like those cloud-phantoms are the gods made in the image of man, who have been worshipped through successive

ages of the world, gods dowered with like passions to those of the races who have crouched before them, gods cruel and malignant and lustful, jealous and noble and just, radiant or gloomy, the counterparts of men upon a vast and shadowy scale. But here another question rose. If the gods that men have made and ignorantly worshipped be really but glorified copies of their own souls, where is the sun in this parallel? Without the sun's rays the mists of Monte Generoso could have shown no shadowy forms. Without some other power than the mind of man, could men have fashioned for themselves those ideals that they named their gods? Unseen by Greek or Norseman or Hindoo, the potent force by which alone they could externalize their image existed outside them, independent of their thought. Nor does the trite epigram touch the surface of the real mystery. The sun, the human beings on the mountain, and the mists are all parts of one material universe: the transient phenomenon we witnessed was but the effect of a chance combination. Is, then, the anthropomorphic God as momentary and as accidental in the system of the world as that vapory spectre? The God in whom we live and move and have our being must be far more all-pervasive, more incognizable by the souls of men, who doubt not for one moment of his presence and his power. Except for purposes of rhetoric the metaphor that seemed so clever fails. Nor, when once such thoughts have been stirred in us by such a sight, can we do better than repeat Goethe's sublime profession of a philosophic mysticism. This translation I made one morning on the Pasterze Gletscher beneath the spires of the Gross Glockner:

To Him who from eternity, self-stirred,  
Himself hath made by His creative word!  
To Him, supreme, who causeth faith to be,  
Trust, hope, love, power, and endless energy!  
To Him who, seek to name Him as we will,  
Unknown within Himself abideth still!

Strain ear and eye, till sight and sense be dim;  
Thou'l find but faint similitudes of Him:  
Yea, and thy spirit in her flight of flame  
Still strives to gauge the symbol and the name:  
Charmed and compelled thou climb'st from height to height,  
And round thy path the world shines wonderous bright;  
Time, space, and size, and distance cease to be,  
And every step is fresh infinity.

What were the God who sat outside to scan  
The spheres that 'neath His finger circling ran?  
God dwells within, and moves the world, and moulds,  
Himself and nature in one form enfolds:  
Thus all that lives in Him and breathes and is  
Shall ne'er His puissance, ne'er His spirit miss.

The soul of man, too, is a universe:  
Whence follows it that race with race concurs  
In naming all it knows of good and true  
God—yea, its own God; and with homage due  
Surrenders to His sway both earth and heaven;  
Fears Him, and loves, where place for love is given.

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## COMO AND IL MEDEGHINO.

To which of the Italian lakes should the palm of beauty be accorded? This question may not unfrequently have moved the idle minds of travellers, wandering through that loveliest region from Orta to Garda—from little Orta, with her gem-like island, rosy granite crags, and chestnut-covered swards above the Colma, to Garda, bluest of all waters, surveyed in majestic length from Desenzano or poetic Sirmione, a silvery sleeping haze of hill and cloud and heaven and clear waves bathed in modulated azure. And between these extreme points what varied lovelinesses lie in broad Maggiore, winding Como, Varese with the laughing face upturned to heaven, Lugano overshadowed by the crested crags of Monte Generoso, and Iseo far withdrawn among the rocky Alps! He who loves immense space, cloud shadows slowly sailing over purple slopes, island gardens, distant glimpses of snow-capped mountains, breadth, air, immensity and flooding sunlight, will choose Maggiore. But scarcely has he cast his vote for this, the Juno of the divine rivals, when he remembers the triple lovelinesses of the Larian Aphrodite, disclosed in all their placid grace from Villa Serbelloni—the green blue of the waters, clear as glass, opaque through depth; the *millefleurs* roses clambering into cypresses by Cadenabbia; the laburnums hanging their yellow clusters from the clefts of

Sasso Rancio; the oleander arcades of Varenna; the wild white limestone crags of San Martino, which he has climbed to feast his eyes with the perspective, magical, serene, Leonardesquely perfect, of the distant gates of Adda. Then while this modern Paris is yet doubting, perhaps a thought may cross his mind of sterner, solitary Lake Iseo—the Pallas of the three. She offers her own attractions. The sublimity of Monte Adamello, dominating Lovere and all the lowland like Hesiod's hill of Virtue reared aloft above the plain of common life, has charms to tempt heroic lovers. Nor can Varese be neglected. In some picturesque respects, Varese is the most perfect of the lakes. Those long lines of swelling hills that lead into the level yield an infinite series of placid fore-grounds, pleasant to the eye by contrast with the dominant snow-summits, from Monte Viso to Monte Leone: the sky is limitless to southward; the low horizons are broken by bell-towers and farm-houses; while armaments of clouds are ever rolling in the interval of Alps and plain.

Of a truth, to decide which is the queen of the Italian lakes is but an *infinita quæstio*; and the mere raising of it is folly. Still each lover of the beautiful may give his vote; and mine, like that of shepherd Paris, is already given to the Larian goddess. Words fail in attempting to set forth charms which have to be enjoyed, or can at best but lightly be touched with most consummate tact, even as great poets have already touched on Como Lake—from Virgil with his “*Lari maxume*,” to Tennyson and the Italian Manzoni. The threshold of the shrine is, however, less consecrated ground; and the Cathedral of Como may form a

vestibule to the temple where silence is more golden than the speech of a describer.

The Cathedral of Como is perhaps the most perfect building in Italy for illustrating the fusion of Gothic and Renaissance styles, both of a good type and exquisite in their sobriety. The Gothic ends with the nave. The noble transepts and the choir, each terminating in a rounded tribune of the same dimensions, are carried out in a simple and decorous Bramantesque manner. The transition from the one style to the other is managed so felicitously, and the sympathies between them are so well developed, that there is no discord. What we here call Gothic is conceived in a truly Southern spirit, without fantastic efflorescence or imaginative complexity of multiplied parts; while the Renaissance manner, as applied by Tommaso Rodari, has not yet stiffened into the lifeless Neo-Latinism of the later Cinque Cento, it is still distinguished by delicate inventiveness and beautiful subordination of decorative detail to architectural effect. Under these happy conditions we feel that the Gothic of the nave, with its superior severity and sombreness, dilates into the lucid harmonies of choir and transepts like a flower unfolding. In the one the mind is tuned to inner meditation and religious awe; in the other the worshipper passes into a temple of the clear explicit faith—as an initiated neophyte might be received into the meaning of the mysteries.

After the collapse of the Roman Empire, the district of Como seems to have maintained more vividly than the rest of Northern Italy some memory of classic art. *Magistri Comacini* is a title frequently inscribed upon deeds and charters of the earlier

Middle Ages, as synonymous with sculptors and architects. This fact may help to account for the purity and beauty of the Duomo. It is the work of a race in which the tradition of delicate artistic invention had never been wholly interrupted. To Tommaso Rodari, and his brothers, Bernardino and Jacopo, the world owes this sympathetic fusion of the Gothic and the Bramantesque styles; and theirs too is the sculpture with which the Duomo is so richly decorated. They were natives of Maroggia, a village near Mendrisio, beneath the crests of Monte Generoso, close to Campione, which sent so many able craftsmen out into the world between the years 1300 and 1500. Indeed the name of Campionesi would probably have been given to the Rodari, had they left their native province for service in Eastern Lombardy. The body of the Duomo had been finished when Tommaso Rodari was appointed master of the fabric in 1487. To complete the work by the addition of a tribune was his duty. He prepared a wooden model and exposed it, after the fashion of those times, for criticism in his *bottega*; and the usual difference of opinion arose among the citizens of Como concerning its merits. Cristoforo Solaro, surnamed Il Gobbo, was called in to advise. It may be remembered that when Michael Angelo first placed his Pietà in St. Peter's, rumor gave it to this celebrated Lombard sculptor, and the Florentine was constrained to set his own signature upon the marble. The same Solaro carved the monument of Beatrice Sforza in the Certosa of Pavia. He was indeed in all points competent to criticise or to confirm the design of his fellow-craftsman. Il Gobbo disapproved of the proportions chosen by Rodari, and

ordered a new model to be made; but after much discussion, and some concessions on the part of Rodari, who is said to have increased the number of the windows and lightened the orders of his model, the work was finally intrusted to the master of Maroggia.

Not less creditable than the general design of the tribune is the sculpture executed by the brothers. The north side door is a master-work of early Renaissance chiselling, combining mixed Christian and classical motives with a wealth of floral ornament. Inside, over the same door, is a procession of children seeming to represent the Triumph of Bacchus, with perhaps some Christian symbolism. Opposite, above the south door, is a frieze of fighting Tritons—horsed sea deities pounding one another with bunches of fish and splashing the water, in Mantegna's spirit. The doorways of the façade are decorated with the same rare workmanship and the canopies, supported by naked fauns and slender twisted figures, under which the two Plinies are seated, may be reckoned among the supreme achievements of delicate Renaissance sculpture. The Plinies are not like the work of the same master. They are older, stiffer, and more Gothic. The chief interest attaching to them is that they are habited and seated after the fashion of Humanists. This consecration of the two pagan saints beside the portals of the Christian temple is truly characteristic of the fifteenth century in Italy. Beneath are little bass-reliefs representing scenes from their respective lives, in the style of carved predellas on the altars of saints.

The whole church is peopled with detached statues, among which a Sebastian in the Chapel of the Madonna must be mentioned as singularly beautiful. It is a

finely modelled figure, with the full life and exuberant adolescence of Venetian inspiration. A peculiar feature of the external architecture is the series of Atlantes, bearing on their shoulders urns, heads of lions, and other devices, and standing on brackets round the upper cornice just below the roof. They are of all sorts: young and old, male and female; classically nude and boldly outlined. These water-conduits, the work of Bernardo Bianco and Francesco Rusca, illustrate the departure of the earlier Renaissance from the Gothic style. They are gargoyle; but they have lost the grotesque element. At the same time the sculptor, while discarding Gothic tradition, has not betaken himself yet to a servile imitation of the antique. He has used invention, and substituted for grinning dragons' heads something wild and bizarre of his own in harmony with classic taste.

The pictures in the chapels, chiefly by Luini and Ferrari—an idyllic Nativity, with faun-like shepherds and choirs of angels—a sumptuous adoration of the Magi—a jewelled Sposalizio with abundance of golden hair flowing over draperies of green and crimson—will interest those who are as yet unfamiliar with Lombard painting. Yet their architectural setting, perhaps, is superior to their intrinsic merit as works of art; and their chief value consists in adding rare dim flakes of color to the cool light of the lovely church. More curious, because less easily matched, is the gilded wood-work above the altar of S. Abondio, attributed to a German carver, but executed, for the most part, in the purest Luinesque manner. The pose of the enthroned Madonna, the type and gesture of St. Catherine, and the treatment of the Pietà above, are thoroughly Lom-

bard, showing how Luini's ideal of beauty could be expressed in carving. Some of the choicest figures in the Monastero Maggiore at Milan seem to have descended from the walls and stepped into their tabernacles on this altar. Yet the style is not maintained consistently. In the reliefs illustrating the life of S. Abondio, we miss Luini's childlike grace, and find instead a something that reminds us of Donatello—a seeking after the classical in dress, carriage, and grouping of accessory figures. It may have been that the carver, recognizing Luini's defective composition, and finding nothing in that master's manner adapted to the spirit of relief, had the good taste to render what was Luinesquely lovely in his female figures, and to fall back on a severer model for his bass-reliefs.

The building-fund for the Duomo was raised in Como and its districts. Boxes were placed in all the churches to receive the alms of those who wished to aid the work. The clergy begged in Lent, and preached the duty of contributing on special days. Presents of lime and bricks and other materials were thankfully received. Bishops, canons, and municipal magistrates were expected to make costly gifts on taking office. Notaries, under penalty of paying one hundred soldi if they neglected their engagement, were obliged to persuade testators, *cum bonis modis dulciter*, to inscribe the Duomo on their wills. Fines for various offences were voted to the building by the city. Each new burgher paid a certain sum; while guilds and farmers of the taxes bought monopolies and privileges at the price of yearly subsidies. A lottery was finally established for the benefit of the fabric. Of course each payment to the good work carried with it spiritual privileges; and

so willingly did the people respond to the call of the Church, that during the sixteenth century the sums subscribed amounted to two hundred thousand golden crowns. Among the most munificent donators are mentioned the Marchese Giacomo Gallio, who bequeathed two hundred and ninety thousand lire, and a Benzi, who gave ten thousand ducats.

While the people of Como were thus straining every nerve to complete a pious work, which, at the same time, is one of the most perfect masterpieces of Italian art, their lovely lake was turned into a pirate's stronghold, and its green waves stained with slaughter of conflicting navies. So curious is this episode in the history of the Larian lake that it is worth while to treat of it at some length. Moreover, the lives of few captains of adventure offer matter more rich in picturesque details and more illustrative of their times than that of Gian Giacorno de' Medici, the Larian corsair, long known and still remembered as Il Medeghino. He was born in Milan in 1498, at the beginning of that darkest and most disastrous period of Italian history, when the old fabric of social and political existence went to ruin under the impact of conflicting foreign armies. He lived on until the year 1555, witnessing and taking part in the dismemberment of the Milanese duchy, playing a game of hazard at high stakes for his own profit with the two last Sforzas, the Empire, the French, and the Swiss. At the beginning of the century, while he was still a youth, the rich valley of the Valtelline, with Bormio and Chiavenna, had been assigned to the Grisons. The Swiss cantons, at the same time, had possessed themselves of Lugano and Bellinzona. By these two acts of robbery the mountaineers tore a

portion of its fairest territory from the duchy; and whoever ruled in Milan, whether a Sforza, or a Spanish viceroy, or a French general, was impatient to recover the lost jewel of the ducal crown. So much has to be premised, because the scene of our hero's romantic adventures was laid upon the borderland between the duchy and the cantons. Intriguing at one time with the Duke of Milan, at another with his foes the French or Spaniards, Il Medeghino found free scope for his peculiar genius in a guerilla warfare, carried on with the avowed purpose of restoring the Valtelline to Milan. To steer a plain course through that chaos of politics, in which the modern student, aided by the calm clear lights of history and meditation, cannot find a clew, was, of course, impossible for an adventurer whose one aim was to gratify his passions and exalt himself at the expense of others. It is, therefore, of little use to seek motives of state-craft or of patriotism in the conduct of Il Medeghino. He was a man shaped according to Machiavelli's standard of political morality—self-reliant, using craft and force with cold indifference to moral ends, bent only upon wringing for himself the largest share of this world's power from men who, like himself, identified virtue with unflinching and immitigable egotism.

Il Medeghino's father was Bernardo de' Medici, a Lombard, who neither claimed nor could have proved cousinship with the great Medicean family of Florence. His mother was Cecilia Serbelloni. The boy was educated in the fashionable humanistic studies, nourishing his young imagination with the tales of Roman heroes. The first exploit by which he proved his *virtù* was the murder of a man he hated, at the age of

sixteen. This "virile act of vengeance," as it was called, brought him into trouble, and forced him to choose the congenial profession of arms. At a time when violence and vigor passed for manliness, a spirited assassination formed the best of introductions to the captains of mixed mercenary troops. Il Medeghino rose in favor with his generals, helped to reinstate Francesco Sforza in his capital, and, returning himself to Milan, inflicted severe vengeance on the enemies who had driven him to exile. It was his ambition, at this early period of his life, to be made governor of the Castle of Musso, on the Lake of Como. While fighting in the neighborhood, he had observed the unrivalled capacities for defence presented by its site; and some prevision of his future destinies now urged him to acquire it, as the basis for the free marauding life he planned. The headland of Musso lies about half-way between Gravedona and Menaggio, on the right shore of the Lake of Como. Planted on a pedestal of rock and surmounted by a sheer cliff, there then stood a very ancient tower, commanding this promontory on the side of the land. Between it and the water the Visconti, in more recent days, had built a square fort; and the headland had been further strengthened by the addition of connecting walls and bastions pierced for cannon. Combining precipitous cliffs, strong towers, and easy access from the lake below, this fortress of Musso was exactly the fit station for a pirate. So long as he kept the command of the lake, he had little to fear from land attacks, and had a splendid basis for aggressive operations. Il Medeghino made his request to the Duke of Milan; but the fox-like Sforza would not grant him a plain answer. At

length he hinted that if his suitor chose to rid him of a troublesome subject, the noble and popular Astore Visconti, he should receive Musso for payment. Crimes of bloodshed and treason sat lightly on the adventurer's conscience. In a short time he compassed the young Visconti's death, and claimed his reward. The duke despatched him thereupon to Musso, with open letters to the governor, commanding him to yield the castle to the bearer. Private advice, also intrusted to Il Medeghino, bade the governor, on the contrary, cut the bearer's throat. The young man, who had the sense to read the duke's letter, destroyed the secret document and presented the other, or, as one version of the story goes, forged a ducal order in his own favor.\* At any rate, the castle was placed in his hands; and affecting to know nothing of the duke's intended treachery, Il Medeghino took possession of it as a trusted servant of the ducal crown.

As soon as he was settled in his castle, the freebooter devoted all his energies to rendering it still more impregnable by strengthening the walls and breaking the cliffs into more horrid precipices. In this work he was assisted by his numerous friends and followers; for Musso rapidly became, like ancient Rome, an asylum for the ruffians and outlaws of neighboring provinces. It is even said that his sisters, Clarina and Margherita, rendered efficient aid with manual labor. The mention of Clarina's name justifies a parenthetical side-glance at Il Medeghino's pedigree, which will serve to illustrate the exceptional conditions of Italian society

\* I cannot see clearly through these transactions, the muddy waters of decadent Italian plot and counterplot being inscrutable to senses assisted by nothing more luminous than mere tradition.

during this age. She was married to the Count Giberto Borromeo, and became the mother of the pious Carlo Borromeo, whose shrine is still adored at Milan in the Duomo. Il Medeghino's brother, Giovan Angelo, rose to the papacy, assuming the title of Pius IV. Thus, this murderous marauder was the brother of a pope and the uncle of a saint; and these three persons of one family embraced the various degrees and typified the several characters which flourished with peculiar lustre in Renaissance Italy—the captain of adventure soaked in blood, the churchman unrivalled for intrigue, and the saint aflame with holiest enthusiasm. Il Medeghino was short of stature, but well made and powerful; broad-chested; with a penetrating voice and winning countenance. He dressed simply, like one of his own soldiers; slept but little; was insensible to carnal pleasure; and though he knew how to win the affection of his men by jovial speech, he maintained strict discipline in his little army. In all points he was an ideal bandit chief, never happy unless fighting or planning campaigns, inflexible of purpose, bold and cunning in the execution of his schemes, cruel to his enemies, generous to his followers, sacrificing all considerations, human and divine, to the one aim of his life—self-aggrandizement by force and intrigue. He knew well how to make himself both feared and respected. One instance of his dealing will suffice. A gentleman of Bellano, Polidoro Boldoni, in return to his advances, coldly replied that he cared for neither amity nor relationship with thieves and robbers; whereupon Il Medeghino extirpated his family almost to a man.

Soon after his settlement in Musso, Il Medeghino,

wishing to secure the gratitude of the duke, his master, began war with the Grisons. From Coire, from the Engadine, and from Davos the Alpine pikemen were now pouring down to swell the troops of Francis I.; and their road lay through the Lake of Como. Il Medeghino burned all the boats upon the lake, except those which he took into his own service, and thus made himself master of the water passage. He then swept the “length of lordly Lario” from Colico to Lecco, harrying the villages upon the shore, and cutting off the bands of journeying Switzers at his pleasure. Not content with this guerilla, he made a descent upon the territory of the Trepievi, and pushed far up towards Chiavenna, forcing the Grisons to recall their troops from the Milanese. These acts of prowess convinced the duke that he had found a strong ally in the pirate chief. When Francis I. continued his attacks upon the duchy, and the Grisons still adhered to their French paymaster, the Sforza formally invested Gian Giacomo de' Medici with the perpetual governorship of Musso, the Lake of Como, and as much as he could wrest from the Grisons above the lake. Furnished now with a just title for his depredations, Il Medeghino undertook the siege of Chiavenna. The town is the key to the valleys of the Splügen and Bregaglia. Strongly fortified and well situated for defence, the burghers of the Grisons well knew that upon its possession depended their power in the Italian valleys. To take it by assault was impossible. Il Medeghino used craft, entered the castle, and soon had the city at his disposition. Nor did he lose time in sweeping Val Bregaglia. The news of this conquest recalled the Switzers from the duchy; and as they hurried

homeward just before the battle of Pavia, it may be affirmed that Gian Giacomo de' Medici was instrumental in the defeat and capture of the French king. The mountaineers had no great difficulty in dislodging their pirate enemy from Chiavenna, the Valtelline, and Val Bregaglia. But he retained his hold on the Trepievi, occupied the Valsassina, took Porlezza, and established himself still more strongly in Musso as the corsair monarch of the lake.

The tyranny of the Sforzas in Milan was fast going to pieces between France and Spain; and in 1526 the Marquis of Pescara occupied the capital in the name of Charles V. The duke, meanwhile, remained a prisoner in his castello. Il Medeghino was now without a master; for he refused to acknowledge the Spaniards, preferring to watch events and build his own power on the ruins of the dukedom. At the head of four thousand men, recruited from the lakes and neighboring valleys, he swept the country far and wide, and occupied the rich champaign of the Brianza. He was now lord of the lakes of Como and Lugano, and absolute in Lecco and the adjoining valleys. The town of Como itself alone belonged to the Spaniards; and even Como was blockaded by the navy of the corsair. Il Medeghino had a force of seven big ships, with three sails and forty-eight oars, bristling with guns and carrying marines. His flag-ship was a large brigantine, manned by picked rowers, from the mast of which floated the red banner with the golden *palle* of the Medicean arms. Besides these larger vessels, he commanded a flotilla of countless small boats. It is clear that to reckon with him was a necessity. If he could not be put down with force, he might be

bought over by concessions. The Spaniards adopted the second course, and Il Medeghino, judging that the cause of the Sforza family was desperate, determined in 1528 to attach himself to the Empire. Charles V. invested him with the Castle of Musso and the larger part of Como lake, including the town of Lecco. He now assumed the titles of Marquis of Musso and Count of Lecco; and in order to prove his sovereignty before the world, he coined money with his own name and devices.

It will be observed than Gian Giacomo de' Medici had hitherto acted with a single-hearted view to his own interests. At the age of thirty he had raised himself from nothing to a principality, which, though petty, might compare with many of some name in Italy—with Carpi, for example, or Mirandola, or Camerino. Nor did he mean to remain quiet in the prime of life. He regarded Como lake as the mere basis for more arduous undertakings. Therefore, when the whirligig of events restored Francesco Sforza to his duchy in 1529, Il Medeghino refused to obey his old lord. Pretending to move under the duke's orders, but really acting for himself alone, he proceeded to attack his ancient enemies, the Grisons. By fraud and force he worked his way into their territory, seized Morbegno, and overran the Valtelline. He was destined, however, to receive a serious check. Twelve thousand Switzers rose against him on the one hand, on the other the Duke of Milan sent a force by land and water to subdue his rebel subject, while Alessandro Gonzaga marched upon his castles in the Brianza. He was thus assailed by formidable forces from three quarters, converging upon the Lake of Como, and

driving him to his chosen element, the water. Hastily quitting the Valtelline, he fell back to the Castle of Mandello on the lake, collected his navy, and engaged the ducal ships in a battle off Menaggio. In this battle he was worsted. But he did not lose his courage. From Bellagio, from Varenna, from Bellano, he drove forth his enemies, rolled the cannon of the Switzers into the lake, regained Lecco, defeated the troops of Alessandro Gonzaga, and took the Duke of Mantua prisoner. Had he but held Como, it is probable that he might have obtained such terms at this time as would have consolidated his tyranny. The town of Como, however, now belonged to the Duke of Milan, and formed an excellent basis for operations against the pirate. Overmatched, with an exhausted treasury and broken forces, Il Medeghino was at last compelled to give in. Yet he retired with all the honors of war. In exchange for Musso and the lake, the duke agreed to give him thirty-five thousand golden crowns, together with the feud and marquisate of Marignano. A free pardon was promised not only to himself and his brothers, but to all his followers; and the duke further undertook to transport his artillery and munitions of war at his own expense to Marignano. Having concluded this treaty under the auspices of Charles V. and his lieutenant, Il Medeghino, in March, 1532, set sail from Musso, and turned his back upon the lake forever. The Switzers immediately destroyed the towers, forts, walls, and bastions of the Musso promontory, leaving in the midst of their ruins the little chapel of S. Eufemia.

Gian Giacomo de' Medici, henceforth known to Europe as the Marquis of Marignano, now took service

under Spain; and through the favor of Anton de Leyva, viceroy for the duchy, rose to the rank of field-marshall. When the Marquis del Vasto succeeded to the Spanish governorship of Milan in 1536, he determined to gratify an old grudge against the ex-pirate, and, having invited him to a banquet, made him prisoner. Il Medeghino was not, however, destined to languish in a dungeon. Princes and kings interested themselves in his fate. He was released, and journeyed to the court of Charles V. in Spain. The emperor received him kindly, and employed him first in the Low Countries, where he helped to repress the burghers of Ghent, and at the siege of Landrecy commanded the Spanish artillery against other Italian captains of adventure; for, Italy being now dismembered and enslaved, her sons sought foreign service where they found best pay and widest scope for martial science. Afterwards the Medici ruled Bohemia as Spanish viceroy; and then, as general of the league formed by the Duke of Florence, the emperor, and the pope to repress the liberties of Tuscany, distinguished himself in that cruel war of extermination which turned the fair Contado of Siena into a poisonous Maremma. To the last Il Medeghino preserved the instincts and the passions of a brigand chief. It was at this time that, acting for the Grand-Duke of Tuscany, he first claimed open kinship with the Medici of Florence. Heralds and genealogists produced a pedigree which seemed to authorize this pretension; he was recognized, together with his brother, Pius IV., as an offshoot of the great house which had already given dukes to Florence, kings to France, and two popes to the Christian world. In the midst of all this foreign service he never forgot his old dream of

conquering the Valtelline; and in 1547 he made proposals to the emperor for a new campaign against the Grisons. Charles V. did not choose to engage in a war the profits of which would have been inconsiderable for the master of half the civilized world, and which might have proved troublesome by stirring up the tameless Switzers. Il Medeghino was obliged to abandon a project cherished from the earliest dawn of his adventurous manhood.

When Gian Giacomo died, in 1555, his brother Battista succeeded to his claims upon Lecco and the Trepievi. His monument, magnificent with five bronze figures, the masterpiece of Leone Lioni, from Menaggio, Michaelangelesque in style, and of consummate workmanship, still adorns the Duomo of Milan. It stands close by the door that leads to the roof. This mausoleum, erected to the memory of Gian Giacomo and his brother Gabrio, is said to have cost 7800 golden crowns. On the occasion of the pirate's funeral the Senate of Milan put on mourning, and the whole city followed the great robber, the hero of Renaissance *virtù*, to the grave.

Between the Cathedral of Como and the corsair Medeghino there is but a slight link. Yet so extraordinary were the social circumstances of Renaissance Italy that almost at every turn, on her seaboard, in her cities, from her hill-tops, we are compelled to blend our admiration for the loveliest and purest works of art amid the choicest scenes of nature with memories of execrable crimes and lawless characters. Sometimes, as at Perugia, the *nexus* is but local. At others, one single figure, like that of Cellini, unites both points of view in a romance of unparalleled

dramatic vividness. Or, again, beneath the vaults of the Certosa, near Pavia, a masterpiece of the serenest beauty carries our thoughts perforce back to the hideous cruelties and snake-like frauds of its despotic founder. This is the excuse for combining two such diverse subjects in one study.

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## PALERMO.

### THE NORMANS IN SICILY.

SICILY, in the centre of the Mediterranean, has been throughout all history the meeting-place and battle-ground of the races that contributed to civilize the West. It was here that the Greeks measured their strength against Phoenicia, and that Carthage fought her first duel with Rome. Here the bravery of Hellenes triumphed over barbarian force in the victories of Gelon and Timoleon. Here, in the harbor of Syracuse, the Athenian Empire succumbed to its own intemperate ambition. Here, in the end, Rome laid her mortmain upon Greek, Phoenician, and Sikeliot alike, turning the island into a granary and reducing its inhabitants to serfdom. When the classic age had closed, when Belisarius had vainly reconquered from the Goths for the empire of the East the fair island of Persephone and Zeus Olympius, then came the Mussulman, filling up with an interval of Oriental luxury and Arabian culture the period of utter deadness between the ancient and the modern world. To

Islam succeeded the conquerors of the house of Hauteville, Norman knights who had but lately left their Scandinavian shores, and settled in the northern provinces of France. The Normans flourished for a season, and were merged in a line of Suabian princes, old Barbarossa's progeny. German rulers thus came to sway the corn-lands of Trinacria, until the bitter hatred of the popes extinguished the house of Hohenstauffen upon the battle-field of Grandella and the scaffold of Naples. Frenchmen had the next turn—for a brief space only; since Palermo cried to the sound of her tocsins, "Mora, Mora," and the tyranny of Anjou was expunged with blood. Spain, the tardy and patient power which inherited so much from the failure of more brilliant races, came at last, and tightened so firm a hold upon the island that, from the end of the thirteenth to the beginning of the nineteenth century, with one brief exception, Sicily belonged to the princes of Aragon, Castile, and Bourbon. These vicissitudes have left their traces everywhere. The Greek temples of Segeste and Girgenti and Selinus, the Roman amphitheatre of Syracuse, the Byzantine mosaics and Saracenic villas of Palermo, the Norman cathedrals of Monreale and Cefalù, and the Spanish habits which still characterize the life of Sicilian cities, testify to the successive strata of races which have been deposited upon the island. Amid its anarchy of tongues, the Latin alone has triumphed. In the time of the Greek colonists Sicily was polyglot. During the Saracenic occupation it was trilingual. It is now, and during modern history it has always been, Italian. Differences of language and of nationality have gradually been fused into one substance by the

spirit which emanates from Rome, and vivifies the Latin race.

The geographical position of Sicily has always influenced its history in a very marked way. The eastern coast, which is turned towards Greece and Italy, has been the centre of Arian civilization in the island, so that during Greek and Roman ascendancy Syracuse was held the capital. The western end, which projects into the African sea, was occupied in the time of the Hellenes by Phœnicians, and afterwards by Mussulmans: consequently Panormus, the ancient seat of Punic colonists, now called Palermo, became the centre of the Moslem rule, which, inherited entire by the Norman chieftains, was transmitted eventually to Spain. Palermo, devoid of classic monuments, and unknown except as a name to the historians of Greek civilization, is therefore the modern capital of the island. "Prima sedes, corona regis, et regni caput" is the motto inscribed upon the cathedral porch and the archiepiscopal throne of Palermo: nor has any other city, except Messina,\* presumed to contest this title.

Perhaps there are few spots upon the surface of the globe more beautiful than Palermo. The hills on either hand descend upon the sea with long-drawn delicately-broken outlines, so exquisitely tinted with aerial hues that at early dawn or beneath the blue light of a full moon the panorama seems to be some fabric of the fancy, that must fade away, "like shapes

\* Messina, owing to its mercantile position between the Levant, Italy, and France, and as the key to Sicily from the mainland, might probably have become the modern capital had not the Normans found a state machinery ready to their use centralized at Palermo.

of clouds we form," to nothing. Within the cradle of these hills, and close upon the tideless water, lies the city. Behind and around on every side stretches the famous *Conca d'Oro*, or golden shell, a plain of marvellous fertility, so called because of its richness and also because of its shape; for it tapers to a fine point where the mountains meet, and spreads abroad, where they diverge, like a cornucopia, towards the sea. The whole of this long vega is a garden, thick with olive-groves and orange-trees, with orchards of nespole and palms and almonds, with fig-trees and locust-trees, with judas-trees that blush in spring, and with flowers as multitudinously brilliant as the fret-work of sunset clouds. It was here that in the days of the Kelbite dynasty, the sugar-cane and cotton-tree and mulberry supplied both East and West with produce for the banquet and the paper-mill and the silk-loom; and though these industries are now neglected, vast gardens of cactuses still give a strangely Oriental character to the scenery of Palermo, while the land flows with honey-sweet wine instead of sugar. The language in which Arabian poets extolled the charms of this fair land is even now nowise extravagant: "Oh how beautiful is the lakelet of the twin palms and the island where the spacious palace stands! The limpid water of the double springs resembles liquid pearls, and their basin is a sea: you would say that the branches of the trees stretched down to see the fishes in the pool and smile at them. The great fishes swim in those clear waters, and the birds among the gardens tune their songs. The ripe oranges of the island are like fire that burns on boughs of emerald; the pale lemon reminds me of a lover who has passed

the night in weeping for his absent darling. The two palms may be compared to lovers who have gained an inaccessible retreat against their enemies, or raise themselves erect in pride to confound the murmurs and ill thoughts of jealous men. O palms of the two lakelets of Palermo, may ceaseless, undisturbed, and plenteous dews forever keep your freshness!" Such is the poetry which suits the environs of Palermo, where the Moorish villas of La Zisa and La Cuba and La Favara still stand, and where the modern gardens, though wilder, are scarcely less delightful than those beneath which King Roger discoursed with Edrisi, and Gian da Procida surprised his sleeping mistress.\* The groves of oranges and lemons are an inexhaustible source of joy: not only because of their "golden lamps in a green night," but also because of their silvery constellations, nebulæ, and drifts of stars, in the same green night, and milky ways of blossoms on the ground beneath. As in all Southern scenery, the transition from these perfumed thickly-clustered gardens to the bare unirrigated hill-sides is very striking. There the dwarf-palm tufts with its spiky foliage the clefts of limestone rock, and the lizards run in and out among bushes of tree-spurge and wild cactus and gray asphodels. The sea-shore is a tangle of lilac and oleander and laurustinus and myrtle and lentisk and cytisus and geranium. The flowering plants that make our shrubberies gay in spring with blossoms are here wild, running riot upon the sand-heaps of Mondello or beneath the barren slopes of Monte Pellegrino.

It was into this terrestrial paradise, cultivated through two preceding centuries by the Arabs, who of

\* Boccaccio, Giorn. v. Nov. 6.

all races were wisest in the art of irrigation and landscape-gardening, that the Norsemen entered as conquerors, and lay down to pass their lives.\*

No chapter of history more resembles a romance than that which records the sudden rise and brief splendor of the house of Hauteville. In one generation the sons of Tancred passed from the condition of squires in the Norman vale of Cotentin, to kinghood in the richest island of the Southern sea. The Norse adventurers became sultans of an Oriental capital. The sea-robbers assumed, together with the sceptre, the culture of an Arabian court. The marauders whose armies burned Rome received at papal hands the mitre and dalmatic as symbols of ecclesiastical jurisdiction.\*\*

\* The Saracens possessed themselves of Sicily by a gradual conquest, which began about 827 A.D. Disembarking on the little isle of Pantellaria and the headland of Lilybæum, where of old the Carthaginians used to enter Sicily, they began by overrunning the island for the first four years. In 831 they took Palermo; during the next ten years they subjugated the Val di Mazara; between 841 and 859 they possessed themselves of the Val di Noto; after this they extended their conquest over the seaport towns of the Val Demone, but neglected to reduce the whole of the northeast district. Syracuse was stormed and reduced to ruins after a desperate defence in 878; while Leo, the heir of the Greek Empire, contented himself with composing two Anacreontic elegies on the disaster at Byzantium. In 895 Sicily was wholly lost to the Greeks, by a treaty signed between the Saracens and the remaining Christian towns. The Christians during the Mussulman occupation were divided into four classes—(1) A few independent municipalities obedient loosely to the Greek Empire; (2) Tributaries who paid the Arabs what they would otherwise have sent to Byzantium; (3) Vassals, whose towns had fallen by arms or treaty into the hands of the conquerors, and who, though their property was respected and religion tolerated, were called “dsimmi” or “humbled;” (4) Serfs, prisoners of war, sold as slaves or attached to the soil (Amari, vol. I.).

\*\* King Roger, in the mosaics of the Martorana Church at

The brigands who on their first appearance in Italy had pillaged stables and farm-yards to supply their needs, lived to mate their daughters with princes and to sway the politics of Europe with gold. The free-booters, whose skill consisted in the use of sword and shield, whose brains were vigorous in strategy or state-craft, and whose pleasures were confined to the hunting-field and the wine-cup, raised villas like the Zisa and incrusted the cathedral of Monreale with mosaics. Finally, while the race was yet vigorous, after giving two heroes to the first Crusade, it transmitted its titles, its temper, and its blood to the great emperor who was destined to fight out upon the battle-field of Italy the strife of empire against papacy, and to bequeath to mediæval Europe the tradition of cosmopolitan culture. The physical energy of this brood of heroes was such as can scarcely be paralleled in history. Tancred de Hauteville begat two families by different wives. Of his children twelve were sons: two of whom stayed with their father in Normandy, while ten sought fame and found a kingdom in the south. Of these, William Iron Arm, the first Count of Apulia; Robert Guiscard, who united Calabria and Apulia under one dukedom, and carried victorious arms against both emperors of East and West; and Roger the Great Count, who added Sicily to the conquests of the Normans and bequeathed the kingdom of South Italy to his son, rose to the highest name. But all the brothers shared the great qualities of the house; and two of them, Humphrey and Drogo, also wore a coronet. Large of limb and stout of heart, persevering under Palermo, wears the dalmatic, and receives his crown from the hands of Christ.

difficulties, crafty yet gifted with the semblance of sincerity, combining the piety of pilgrims with the morals of highwaymen, the sturdiness of barbarians with the plasticity of culture, eloquent in the council-chamber and the field, dear to their soldiers for their bravery and to women for their beauty, equally eminent as generals and as rulers, restrained by no scruples but such as policy suggested, restless in their energy, yet neither fickle nor rash, comprehensive in their views, but indefatigable in detail, these lions among men were made to conquer in the face of overwhelming obstacles, and to hold their conquests with a grasp of iron. What they wrought, whether wisely or not for the ultimate advantage of Italy, endures to this day; while the work of so many emperors, republics, and princes has passed and shifted like the scenes in a pantomime. Through them the Greeks, the Lombards, and the Moors were extinguished in the south. The papacy was checked in its attempt to found a province of St. Peter below the Tiber. The republics of Naples, Gaeta, Amalfi, which might have rivalled, perchance, with Milan, Genoa, and Florence, were subdued to a master's hand. In short, to the Normans Italy owed that kingdom of the Two Sicilies which formed one third of her political balance, and which proved the cause of all her most serious revolutions.

Roger, the youngest of the Hauteville family, and the founder of the kingdom of Sicily, showed by his untamable spirit and sound intellect that his father's vigor remained unexhausted. Each of Tancred's sons was, physically speaking, a masterpiece, and the last was the prime work of all. This Roger, styled the Great Count, begat a second Roger, the first king of

Sicily, whose son and grandson, both named William, ruled in succession at Palermo. With them the direct line of the house of Hauteville expired. It would seem as if the energy and fertility of the stock had been drained by its efforts in the first three generations. Constance, the heiress of the family, who married Henry VI. and gave birth to the Emperor Frederick II., was daughter of King Roger, and, therefore, third in descent from Tancred. Drawing her blood more immediately from the parent stem, she thus transmitted to the princes of the race of Hohenstauffen the vigor of her Norman ancestry unweakened. This was a circumstance of no small moment in the history of Europe. Upon the fierce and daring Suabian stem were grafted the pertinacity, the cunning, the versatility of the Norman adventurers. Young Frederick, while strong and subtle enough to stand for himself against the world, was so finely tempered by the blended strains of his parentage that he received the polish of an Oriental education without effeminacy. Called upon to administer the affairs of Germany, to govern Italy, to contend with the papacy, and to settle by arms and treaties the great Oriental question of his days, Frederick, cosmopolitan from the cradle, was equal to the task. Had Europe been but ready, the Renaissance would have dated from his reign, and a universal empire, if not of political government, yet of intellectual culture, might have been firmly constituted.

Of the personal appearance of the Norman chiefs—their fair hair, clear eyes, and broad shoulders—we hear much from the chroniclers. One minutely studied portrait will serve to bring the whole race vividly before us. Bohemond, Prince of Tarentum, the son of

Robert Guiscard, and first cousin to Tancred of Montferrat, was thus described by Anna Comnena, who saw him at her father's court during the first Crusade: "Neither among our own nation (the Greeks) nor among foreigners is there in our age a man equal to Bohemond. His presence dazzled the eyes, as his reputation the fancy. He was one cubit taller than the tallest man known. In his waist he was thin, but broad in his shoulders and chest, without being either too thin or too fat. His arms were strong, his hands full and large, his feet firm and solid. He stooped a little, but through habit only, and not on account of any deformity. He was fair, but on his cheeks there was an agreeable mixture of vermillion. His hair was not loose over his shoulders, according to the fashion of the barbarians, but was cut above his ears. His eyes were blue, and full of wrath and fierceness. His nostrils were large, inasmuch as, having a wide chest and a great heart, his lungs required an unusual quantity of air to moderate the warmth of his blood. His handsome face had in itself something gentle and softening, but the height of his person and the fierceness of his looks had something wild and terrible. He was more dreadful in his smiles than others in their rage." When we read this description, remembering the romance of Bohemond's ancestry and his own life, we do not wonder at the tales of chivalry. Those "knights of Logres and of Lyoness, Lancelot or Pelleas or Pellenore," with whose adventures our tawny-haired magnificent Plantagenets amused their leisure, become realities. The manly beauty described by the Byzantine princess in words which seem to betray a more than common interest in her handsome foe was hereditary

in the house of Hauteville. They transmitted it to the last of the Suabian dynasty, to Manfred and Conradin, and to the king Enzio, whose long golden hair fell down from his shoulders to his saddle-bow as he rode, a captive, into Bologna.

The story of the Norman conquest is told by two chroniclers — William of Apulia, who received his materials from Robert Guiscard, and Godfrey Malaterra, who wrote down the oral narrative of Roger. Thus we possess what is tantamount to personal memoirs of the Norman chiefs. Nevertheless, a veil of legendary romance obscures the first appearance of the Scandinavian warriors upon the scene of history. William of Apulia tells how, in the course of a pilgrimage to St. Michael's shrine on Monte Gargano, certain knights of Normandy were accosted by a stranger of imposing aspect, who persuaded them to draw their swords in the quarrel of the Lombard towns of South Italy against the Greeks. This man was Melo of Bari. Whether his invitation were so theatrically conveyed or not, it is probable that the Norsemen made their first acquaintance with Apulia on a pilgrimage to the Italian Michael's mount; and it is certain that Melo, whom we dimly descry as a patriot of enlarged views and indomitable constancy, provided them with arms and horses, raised troops in Salerno and Benevento to assist them, and directed them against the Greeks. This happened in 1017. Twelve years later we find the town of Aversa built and occupied by Normans under the control of their Count Rainulf; while another band, headed by Ardoine, a Lombard of Milan, lived at laige upon the country, selling its services to the Byzantine Greeks. In the anarchy of Southern Italy at this epoch, when

the decaying Empire of the East was relaxing its hold upon the Apulian provinces, when the papacy was beginning to lift up its head after the ignominy of Theodora and Marozia, and the Lombard power was slowly dissolving upon its ill-established foundations, the Norman adventurers pursued a policy which, however changeful, was invariably self-advantageous. On whatever side they fought, they took care that the profits of war should accrue to their own colony. Quarrel as they might among themselves, they were always found at one against a common foe. And such was their reputation in the field that the hardiest soldiers errant of all nations joined their standard. Thus it fell out that when Ardoine and his Normans had helped Maniaces to wrest the eastern districts of Sicily from the Moors, they returned, upon an insult offered by the Greek general, to extend the right hand of fellowship to Rainulf and his Normans of Aversa. "Why should you stay here like a rat in his hole, when with our help you might rule those fertile plains, expelling the women in armor who keep guard over them?" The agreement of Ardoine and Rainulf formed the basis of the future Norman power. Their companies joined forces. Melfi was chosen as the centre of their federal government. The united Norman colony elected twelve chiefs or counts of equal authority; and henceforth they thought only of consolidating their ascendancy over the effete races which had hitherto pretended to employ their arms. The genius of their race and age, however, was unfavorable to federations. In a short time the ablest man among them, the true king, by right of personal vigor and mental cunning, showed himself. It was at this point that the house of Hauteville rose to the

altitude of its romantic destiny. William Iron Arm was proclaimed Count of Apulia. Two of his brothers succeeded him in the same dignity. His half-brother, Roberd Guiscard, imprisoned one Pope,\* Leo IX., and wrested from another, Nicholas II., the title of Duke of Apulia and Calabria. By the help of his youngest brother, Roger, he gradually completed the conquest of Italy below the Tiber, and then addressed himself to the task of subduing Sicily. The papacy, incapable of opposing the military vigor of the Northmen, was distracted between jealousy of their growing importance and desire to utilize them for its own advantage.\*\* The temptation to employ these filial pirates as a cat's-paw for restoring Sicily to the bosom of the Church was too strong to be resisted. In spite of many ebbs and flows of policy, the favor which the Popes accorded to the Normans gilded the might and cunning of the adventurers with the specious splendor of acknowledged

\* The Normans were lucky in getting hold of popes. King Roger caught Innocent II. at San Germano in 1139, and got from him the confirmation of all his titles.

\*\* Even the great Hildebrand wavered in his policy towards Robert Guiscard. Having raised an army by the help of the Countess Matilda in 1074, he excommunicated Robert and made war against him. Robert proved more than his match in force and craft; and Hildebrand had to confirm his title as duke, and designate him Knight of St. Peter in 1080. When Robert drove the emperor Henry IV. from Rome, and burned the city of the Cœlian, Hildebrand retired with his terrible defender to Salerno, and died there in 1085. Robert and both Rogers were good sons of the Church, deserving the titles of "Terror of the faithless," "Sword of the Lord drawn from the scabbard of Sicily," as long as they were suffered to pursue their own schemes of empire. They respected the Pope's person and his demesne of Benevento; they were largely liberal in donations to churches and abbeys. But they did not suffer their piety to interfere with their ambition.

sanctity. The time might come for casting off these powerful allies and adding their conquests to the patrimony of St. Peter. Meanwhile it costs nothing to give away what does not belong to one, particularly when by doing so a title to the same is gradually formed. So the Popes reckoned. Robert and Roger went forth with banners blessed by Rome to subjugate the island of the Greek and Moor.

The honors of this conquest, paralleled for boldness only by the achievements of Cortez and Pizarro, belong to Roger. It is true that since the fall of the Kelbite dynasty Sicily had been shaken by anarchy and despotism, by the petty quarrels of princes and party leaders, and to some extent also by the invasion of Maniaces. Yet on the approach of Roger with a handful of Norman knights, "the island was guarded," to quote Gibbon's energetic phrase, "to the water's edge." For some years he had to content himself with raids and harrying excursions, making Messina, which he won from the Moors by the aid of their Christian serfs and vassals, the basis of his operations, and retiring from time to time across the Faro with booty to Reggio. The Mussulmans had never thoroughly subdued the northeastern highlands of Sicily. Satisfied with occupying the whole western and southern sections of the island, with planting their government firmly at Palermo, destroying Syracuse, and establishing a military post on the heights of Castro Giovanni, they had somewhat neglected the Christian population of the Val Demone. Thus the key to Sicily upon the Italian side fell into the hands of the invaders. From Messina Roger advanced by Rametta and Centorbi to Troina, a hill-town raised high above the level of the

sea, within view of the solemn blue-black pyramid of Ætna. There he planted a garrison in 1062, two years after his first incursion into the island. The interval had been employed in marches and countermarches, descents upon the vale of Catania, and hurried expeditions as far as Girgenti, on the southern coast. One great battle is recorded beneath the walls of Castro Giovanni, when six hundred Norman knights, so say the chroniclers, engaged with fifteen thousand of the Arabian chivalry and one hundred thousand foot-soldiers. However great the exaggeration of these numbers, it is certain that the Christian fought at fearful odds that day, and that all the eloquence of Roger, who wrought on their fanaticism in his speech before the battle, was needed to raise their courage to the sticking-point. The scene of the great rout of Saracens which followed is in every respect memorable. Castro Giovanni, the old Enna of the Greeks and Romans, stands on the top of a precipitous mountain, two thousand feet above a plain which waves with corn. A sister height, Calascibetta, raised nearly to an equal altitude, keeps ward over the same valley; and from their summits the whole of Sicily is visible. Here in old days Demeter from her rock-built temple could survey vast tracts of hill and dale, breaking downward to the sea and undulating everywhere with harvest. The much-praised lake and vale of Enna\* are now a

\* Cicero's description of Enna is still accurate: "Enna is placed in a very lofty and exposed situation, at the top of which is a table-land and never-failing supply of springs. The whole site is cut off from access, and precipitous." But when he proceeds to say, "many groves and lakes surround it and luxuriant flowers through all the year," we cannot follow him. The only quality which Enna has not lost is the impregnable nature of its cliffs. A few poplars

desolate sulphur district, void of beauty, with no flowers to tempt Proserpine. Yet the landscape is eminently noble because of its breadth--bare, naked hills stretching in every direction to the sea that girdles Sicily, peak rising above peak and town capped eyrie above eyrie—while *Ætna*, wreathed with snow, and purple with the peculiar color of its coal-black lava seen through light-irradiated air, sleeps far off beneath a crown of clouds. Upon the corn-fields in the centre of this landscape the multitudes of the infidels were smitten hip and thigh by the handful of Christian warriors. Yet the victory was by no means a decisive one. The Saracens swarmed round the Norman fortress of Troina; where, during a severe winter, Roger and his young wife, Judith of Evreux, whom he had loved in Normandy, and who journeyed to marry him amid the din of battles, had but one cloak to protect them both from the cold. The traveller who even in April has experienced the chill of a high set Sicilian village will not be inclined to laugh at the hardships revealed by this little incident. Yet the Normans, one and all, were stanch. A victory over their assailants in the

and thorns are all that remain of its forests. Did we not know that the myth of Demeter and Persephone was a poem of seed-time and harvest, we might be tempted, while sitting on the crags of Castro Giovanni and looking towards the lake, to fancy that in old days a village dependent upon Emma, and therefore called her daughter, might have occupied the site of the lake, and that this village might have been withdrawn into the earth by the volcanic action which produced the cavity. Then people would have said that Demeter had lost Persephone and sought her vainly through all the cities of Sicily; and if this happened in spring Persephone might well have been thought to have been gathering flowers at the time when Ha les took her to himself. So easy and yet so dangerous is it to rationalize a legend.

spring gave them courage to push their arms as far as the river Himera and beyond the Simeto, while a defeat of fifty thousand Saracens by four hundred Normans at Cerami opened the way at last to Palermo. Reading of these engagements, we are led to remember how Gelon smote his Punic foes upon the Himera, and Timoleon arrayed Greeks by the ten against Carthaginians by the thousand on the Crimisus. The battle-fields are scarcely altered; the combatants are as unequally matched, and represent analogous races. It is still the combat of a few heroic Europeans against the hordes of Asia. In the battle of Cerami it is said that St. George fought visibly on horseback before the Christian band, like that wide-winged chivalrous archangel whom Spinello Aretino painted beside Sant' Efeso in the press of men upon the walls of the Pisan Campo Santo.

The capture of Palermo cost the Normans another eight years, part of which was spent according to their national tactics in plundering expeditions, part in the subjugation of Catania and other districts, part in the blockade of the capital by sea and land. After the fall of Palermo, it only remained for Roger to reduce isolated cities—Taormina, Syracuse,\* Girgenti, and Castro Giovanni—to his sway. The last-named and strongest hold of the Saracens fell into his hands by the treason of Ibn-Hamûd in 1087, and thus, after thirty years' continual effort, the two brothers were at last able to divide the island between them. The lion's share, as was due, fell to Roger, who styled himself Great Count of Sicily and Calabria. In 1098,

\* In this siege, as in that of the Athenians, and of the Saracens 878 A.D., decisive engagements took place in the great harbor.

Urban II., a politician of the school of Cluny, who well understood the scope of Hildebrand's plan for subjecting Europe to the court of Rome, rewarded Roger for his zeal in the service of the Church with the title of Hereditary Apostolical Legate. The Great Count was now on a par with the most powerful monarchs of Europe. In riches he exceeded all; so that he was able to wed one daughter to the King of Hungary, another to Conrad, King of Italy, a third to Raimond, Count of Provence and Toulouse, dowering them all with imperial splendor and munificence.

Hale and vigorous, his life was prolonged through a green old-age until his seventieth year. When he died, in 1101, he left two sons by his third wife, Adelaide. Roger, the younger of the two, destined to succeed his father, and (on the death of his cousin, William, Duke of Apulia, in 1127) to unite South Italy and Sicily under one crown, was only four years old at the death of the Great Count. Inheriting all the valor and intellectual qualities of his family, he rose to even higher honor than his predecessors. In 1130 he assumed the style of King of Sicily, no doubt with the political purpose of impressing his Mussulman subjects; and nine years later, when he took Innocent captive at San Germano, he forced from the half-willing pontiff a confirmation of this title as well as the investiture of Apulia, Calabria, and Capua. The extent of his sway is recorded in the line engraved upon his sword:

“Appulus et Calaber Siculus mihi servit et Afer.”

King Roger died in 1154, and bequeathed his kingdoms to his son William, surnamed the Bad; who in

his turn left them to a William called the Good, in 1166. The second William died in 1189, transmitting his possessions by will to Constance, wife of the Suabian emperor. These two Williams, the last of the Hauteville monarchs of Sicily, were not altogether unworthy of their Norman origin. William the Bad could rouse himself from the sloth of his seraglio to head an army; William the Good, though feeble in foreign policy and no general, administered the State with clemency and wisdom.

Sicily under the Normans offered the spectacle of a singularly hybrid civilization. Christians and Northmen, adopting the habits and imbibing the culture of their Mussulman subjects, ruled a mixed population of Greeks, Arabs, Berbers, and Italians. The language of the princes was French; that of the Christians in their territory, Greek and Latin; that of their Mohammedan subjects, Arabic. At the same time the Scandinavian Sultans of Palermo did not cease to play an active part in the affairs, both civil and ecclesiastical, of Europe. The children of the Vikings, though they spent their leisure in harems, exercised, as hereditary Legates of the Holy See, a peculiar jurisdiction in the Church of Sicily. They dispensed benefices to the clergy, and assumed the mitre and dalmatic, together with the sceptre and the crown, as symbols of their authority in Church as well as State. As a consequence of this confusion of nationalities in Sicily, we find French and English ecclesiastics\* mingling at

\* The English Gualterio Offamilio, or Walter of the Mill, Archbishop of Palermo during the reign of William the Good, by his intrigues brought about the match between Constance and Henry VI. Richard Palmer at the same time was Bishop of Syracuse. Stephen

court with Moorish freedmen and Oriental odalisques, Apulian captains fraternizing with Greek corsairs, Jewish physicians in attendance on the person of the prince, and Arabian poets eloquent in his praises. The very money with which Roger subsidized his Italian allies was stamped with Cuphic letters,\* and there is reason to believe that the reproach against Frederick of being a false coiner arose from his adopting the Eastern device of plating copper pieces to pass for silver. The commander of Roger's navies and his chief minister of State was styled, according to Oriental usage, Emir or Ammiraglio. George of Antioch, who swept the shores of Africa, the Morea, and the Black Sea, in his service, was a Christian of the Greek Church, who had previously held an office of finance under Temin, Prince of Mehdia. The workers in his silk-factories were slaves from Thebes and Corinth. The pages of his palace were Sicilian or African eunuchs. His charters ran in Arabic as well as Greek and Latin. His jewellers engraved the rough gems of the Orient with Christian mottoes in Semitic characters.\*\* His architects were Mussulmans, who adapted their native style to the requirements of Christian ritual, and includes Rotrous, a Frenchman of the Counts of Perche, preceded Walter of the Mill in the Arch See of Palermo.

\* Frederick Barbarossa's soldiers are said to have bidden the Romans: "Take this German iron in change for Arab gold. This pay your master gives you, and this is how Franks win empire."—Amari, vol. III. p. 468.

\*\* The embroidered skull-cap of Constance of Aragon, wife of Frederick II., in the sacristy of the cathedral at Palermo, is made of gold thread thickly studded with pearls and jewels—rough sapphires and carbuncles, among which may be noticed a red carnelian engraved in Arabic with this sentence, "In Christ, God, I put my hope."

scribed the walls of cathedrals with Catholic legends in the Cuphic language. The predominant characteristic of Palermo was Orientalism. Religious toleration was extended to the Mussulmans, so that the two creeds, Christian and Mohammedan, flourished side by side. The Saracens had their own quarters in the towns, their mosques and schools, and cadis for the administration of petty justice. French and Italian women in Palermo adopted the Oriental fashions of dress. The administration of law and government was conducted on Eastern principles. In nothing had the Mussulmans shown greater genius than in their system of internal state-craft. Count Roger found a machinery of taxation in full working order, officers acquainted with the resources of the country, books and schedules constructed on the principles of strictest accuracy, a whole bureaucracy, in fact, ready to his use. By applying this machinery he became the richest potentate in Europe, at a time when the Northern monarchs were dependent upon feudal aids and precarious revenues from crown lands. In the same way the Saracens bequeathed to the Normans the court system, which they in turn had derived from the princes of Persia and the example of Constantinople. Roger found it convenient to continue that organization of pages, chamberlains, ushers, secretaries, viziers, and masters of the wardrobe, invested each with some authority of State according to his rank, which confined the administration of an Eastern kingdom to the walls of the palace.\* At Palermo,

\* The Arabic title of *Kāid*, which originally was given to a subordinate captain of the guard, took a wide significance at the Norman court. Latinized to *gavtus*, and Græcized under the form of *zaitos*, it frequently occurs in chronicles and diplomas to denote

Europe saw the first instance of a court not wholly unlike that which Versailles afterwards became. The intrigues which endangered the throne and liberty of William the Bad, and which perplexed the policy of William the Good, were court-conspiracies of a kind common enough at Constantinople. In this court life men of letters and erudition played a first part three centuries before Petrarch taught the princes of Italy to respect the pen of a poet.

King Roger, of whom the court geographer, Edrisi, writes that "he did more sleeping than any other man waking," was surrounded during his leisure moments, beneath the palm-groves of Favara, with musicians, historians, travellers, mathematicians, poets, and astrologers of Oriental breeding. At his command Ptolemy's Optics were translated into Latin from the Arabic. The prophecies of the Erythrean Sibyl were rendered accessible in the same way. His respect for the occult sciences was proved by his disinterring the bones of Virgil from their resting-place at Posilippo, and placing them in the Castel dell' Uovo, in order that he might have access through necromancy to the spirit of the Roman wizard. It may be remembered, in passing, that Palermo, in one of her mosques, already held

a high minister of State. Matteo of Ajello—who exercised so powerful an influence over the policy of William the Good, heading the Mussulman and national party against the great ecclesiastics who were intriguing to draw Sicily into the entanglements of European diplomacy—was a Kâid. Matteo favored the cause of Tancred, Walter of the Mill espoused that of the Germans, during the war of succession which followed upon William's death. The barons of the realm had to range themselves under these two leaders—to such an extent were the affairs of State in Sicily within the grasp of courtiers and churchmen.

suspended between earth and air the supposed relics of Aristotle. Such were the saints of modern culture in its earliest dawning. While Venice was robbing Alexandria of the body of St. Mark, Palermo and Naples placed themselves beneath the protection of a philosopher and a poet. But Roger's greatest literary work was the compilation of a treatise of universal geography. Fifteen years were devoted to the task; and the manuscript, in Arabic, drawn up by the philosopher Edrisi, appeared only six weeks before the king's death in 1154. This book, called *The Book of Roger, or the Delight of Whoso Loves to Make the Circuit of the World*, was based upon the previous labors of twelve geographers, classical and Mussulman. But aiming at greater accuracy than could be obtained by a merely literary compilation, Roger caused pilgrims, travellers, and merchants of all countries to be assembled for conference and examination before him. Their accounts were sifted and collated. Edrisi held the pen while Roger questioned. Measurements and distances were carefully compared; and a vast silver disk was constructed, on which all the seas, islands, continents, plains, rivers, mountain-ranges, cities, roads, and harbors of the known world were delineated. The text supplied an explanatory description of this map, with tables of the products, habits, races, religions, and qualities, both physical and moral, of all climates. The precious metal upon which the map was drawn proved its ruin, and the Geography remained in the libraries of Arab scholars. Yet this was one of the first great essays of practical exploration and methodical statistic, to which the genius of the Norseman and the Arab each contributed a quota. The Arabians, by their primitive

nomadic habits, by the necessities of their system of taxation, by their predilection for astrology, by their experience as pilgrims, merchants, and poets errant, were specially qualified for the labor of geographical investigation. Roger supplied the unbounded curiosity and restless energy of his Scandinavian temper, the kingly comprehensive intellect of his race, and the authority of a prince who was powerful enough to compel the service of qualified collaborators.

The architectural works of the Normans in Palermo reveal the same ascendancy of Arab culture. San Giovanni degli Eremiti, with its low white rounded domes, is nothing more or less than a little mosque adapted to the rites of Christians.\* The country palaces of the Zisa and the Cuba, built by the two Williams, retain their ancient Moorish character. Standing beneath the fretted arches of the hall of the Zisa, through which a fountain flows within a margin of carved marble, and looking on the landscape from its open porch, we only need to reconstruct in fancy the green gardens and orange-groves, where fair-haired Normans whiled away their hours among black-eyed odalisques and graceful singing boys from Persia. Amid a wild tangle of orange and lemon trees overgrown with scarlet passion-flowers, the pavilion of the Cubola, built of hewn stone and open at each of its four sides, still stands much as it stood when William II. paced through flowers from his palace of the Cuba, to enjoy the freshness of the evening by the side of its fountain. The views from all these Saracenic villas over the fruitful valley of the Golden Horn and the

\* Tradition asserts that the tocsin of this church gave the signal in Palermo to the massacre of the Sicilian Vespers.

turrets of Palermo and the mountains and the distant sea are ineffably delightful. When the palaces were new—when the gilding and the frescos still shone upon their honey-combed ceilings, when their mosaics glittered in noonday twilight, and their amber-colored masonry was set in shade of pines and palms, and the cool sound of rivulets made music in their courts and gardens, they must have well deserved their Arab titles of “Sweet Waters” and “The Glory” and “The Paradise of Earth.”

But the true splendor of Palermo, that which makes this city one of the most glorious of the South, is to be sought in its churches—in the mosaics of the Cappella Palatina, founded by King Roger; in the vast aisles and cloisters of Monreale, built by King William the Good at the instance of his Chancellor Matteo;\* in the Cathedral of Palermo, begun by Offamilio; and in the Martorana, dedicated by George the Admiral. These triumphs of ecclesiastical architecture, none the less splendid because they cannot be reduced to rule or assigned to any single style, were the work of Saracen builders assisted by Byzantine, Italian, and Norman craftsmen. The genius of Latin Christianity determined the basilica shape of the Cathedral of Monreale. Its bronze doors were wrought by smiths of Trani and Pisa. Its walls were incrusted with the mosaics of Constantinople. The wood-work of its roof, and the emblazoned patterns in porphyry and serpentine and glass and smalto which cover its whole surface, were designed by Oriental decorators. Norman sculptors added their dog-tooth and chevron to

\* Matteo of Ajello induced William to found an archbishopric at Monreale in order to spite his rival Offamilio.

the mouldings of its porches; Greeks, Frenchmen, and Arabs may have tried their skill in turn upon the multitudinous ornaments of its cloister capitals. "The like of which church," said Lucius III., in 1182, "hath not been constructed by any king even from ancient times, and such an one as must compel all men to admiration." These words remain literally and emphatically true. Other cathedrals may surpass that of Monreale in sublimity, simplicity, bulk, strength, or unity of plan. None can surpass it in the strange romance with which the memory of its many artificers invests it. None again can exceed it in richness and glory, in the gorgeousness of a thousand decorative elements subservient to one controlling thought. "It is evident," says Fergusson in his *History of Architecture*, "that all the architectural features in the building were subordinate in the eyes of the builders to the mosaic decorations, which cover every part of the interior, and are, in fact, the glory and the pride of the edifice, and alone entitle it to rank among the finest of mediæval churches." The whole of the Christian history is depicted in this series of mosaics; but on first entering one form alone compels attention. The semi-dome of the eastern apse above the high-altar is entirely filled with a gigantic half-length figure of Christ. He raises his right hand to bless, and with his left holds an open book on which is written in Greek and Latin, "I am the light of the world." His face is solemn and severe, rather than mild or piteous; and round his nimbus runs the legend *Ιησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ*. Below him, on a smaller scale, are ranged the archangels and the mother of the Lord, who holds the child upon her knees. Thus Christ

appears twice upon this wall, once as the Omnipotent Wisdom, the Word by whom all things were made, and once as God deigning to assume a shape of flesh and dwell with men. The magnificent image of supreme deity seems to fill with a single influence and to dominate the whole building. The house with all its glory is his. He dwells there like Pallas in her Parthenon or Zeus in his Olympian temple. To left and right over every square inch of the cathedral blaze mosaics, which portray the story of God's dealings with the human race from the creation downward, together with those angelic beings and saints who symbolize each in his own degree some special virtue granted to mankind. The walls of the fane are therefore an open book of history, theology, and ethics for all men to read.

The superiority of mosaics over fresco as an architectural adjunct on this gigantic scale is apparent at a glance in Monreale. Permanency of splendor and glowing richness of tone are all on the side of the mosaics. Their true rival is painted glass. The jewelled churches of the South are constructed for the display of colored surfaces illuminated by sunlight falling on them from narrow windows, just as those of the North—Rheims, for example, or Le Mans—are built for the transmission of light through a variegated medium of transparent hues. The painted windows of a Northern cathedral find their proper counterpart in the mosaics of the South. The Gothic architect strove to obtain the greatest amount of translucent surface. The Byzantine builder directed his attention to securing just enough light for the illumination of his glistening walls. The radiance of the Northern

church was similar to that of flowers or sunset clouds or jewels. The glory of the Southern temple was that of dusky gold and gorgeous needlework. The North needed acute brilliancy as a contrast to external grayness. The South found rest from the glare and glow of noonday in these sombre splendors. Thus Christianity, both of the South and of the North, decked her shrines with color. Not so the paganism of Hellas. With the Greeks, color, though used in architecture, was severely subordinated to sculpture. Toned and modified to a calculated harmony with actual nature, it did not, as in a Christian church, create a world beyond the world, a paradise of supersensual ecstasy, but remained within the limits of the known. Light falling upon carved forms of gods and heroes, bathing clear-cut columns and sharp bass-reliefs in simple lustre, was enough for the Phœbean rites of Hellas. Though we know that red and blue and green and gilding were employed to accentuate the mouldings of Greek temples, yet neither the gloomy glory of mosaics nor the gemmed fretwork of storied windows was needed to attune the souls of Hellenic worshippers to devotion.

Less vast than Monreale, but even more beautiful, because the charm of mosaic increases in proportion as the surface it covers may be compared to the the interior of a casket, is the Cappella Palatina of the royal palace in Palermo. Here, again, the whole design and ornament are Arabo-Byzantine. Saracenic pendentives with Cuphic legends incrust the richly painted ceiling of the nave. The roofs of the apses and the walls are coated with mosaics, in which the Bible history, from the dove that brooded over Chaos

to the lives of St. Peter and St. Paul, receives a grand though formal presentation. Beneath the mosaics are ranged slabs of gray marble, edged and divided with delicate patterns of inserted glass resembling drapery with richly embroidered fringes. The floor is inlaid with circles of serpentine and porphyry encased in white marble, and surrounded by winding bands of Alexandrine work. Some of these patterns are restricted to the five tones of red, green, white, black, and pale yellow. Others add turquoise blue and emerald and scarlet and gold. Not a square inch of the surface—floor, roof, walls, or cupola—is free from exquisite gemmed work of precious marbles. A candelabrum of fanciful design, combining lions devouring men and beasts, cranes, flowers, and winged genii, stands by the pulpit. Lamps of chased silver hang from the roof. The cupola blazes with gigantic archangels, stationed in a ring beneath the supreme figure and face of Christ. Some of the Ravenna churches are more historically interesting, perhaps, than this little masterpiece of the mosaic art. But none is so rich in detail and lustrous in effect. It should be seen at night, when the lamps are lighted in a pyramid around the sepulchre of the dead Christ on Holy Thursday, when partial gleams strike athwart the tawny gold of the arches and fall upon the profile of a priest declaiming in voluble Italian to a listening crowd.

Such are a few of the monuments which still remain to show of what sort was the mixed culture of Normans, Saracens, Italians, and Greeks at Palermo. In scenes like these the youth of Frederick II. was passed:—for at the end, while treating of Palermo, we

are bound to think again of the emperor who inherited from his German father the ambition of the Hohenstauffens, and from his Norman mother the fair fields and Oriental traditions of Sicily. The strange history of Frederick—an intellect of the eighteenth century born out of date, a cosmopolitan spirit in the age of St. Louis, the crusader who conversed with Moslem sages on the threshold of the Holy Sepulchre, the Sultan of Lucera\* who persecuted Paterini while he respected the superstition of Saracens, the anointed successor of Charlemagne, who carried his harem with him to the battle-fields of Lombardy and turned infidels loose upon the provinces of Christ's Vicar—would be inexplicable were it not that Palermo still reveals in all her monuments the *genius loci* which gave spiritual nurture to this phoenix among kings. From his Mussulman teachers Frederick derived the philosophy to which he gave a vogue in Europe. From his Arabian predecessors he learned the arts of internal administration and finance which he transmitted to the princes of Italy. In imitation of Oriental courts, he adopted the practice of verse composition, which gave the first impulse to Italian literature. His Grand Vizier, Piero Delle Vigne, set an example to Petrarch,

\* Charles of Anjou gave this nickname to Manfred, who carried on the Siculi-Norman tradition. Frederick, it may here be mentioned, had transferred his Saracen subjects of the vale of Mazara to Lucera in the Capitanate. He employed them as trusty troops in his warfare with the popes and preaching friars. Nothing shows the confusion of the century in matters ecclesiastical and religious more curiously than that Frederick, who conducted a crusade and freed the Holy Sepulchre, should not only have tolerated the religion of Mussulmans, but also have armed them against the head of the Church. What we are apt to regard as religious questions really belonged at that period to the sphere of politics.

not only by composing the first sonnet in Italian, but also by showing to what height a low-born secretary versed in art and law might rise. In a word, the zeal for liberal studies, the luxury of life, the religious indifferentism, the bureaucratic system of State government, which mark the age of the Italian Renaissance, found their first manifestation within the bosom of the Middle Ages in Frederick. While our King John was signing *Magna Charta*, Frederick had already lived long enough to comprehend, at least in outline, what is meant by the spirit of modern culture.\* It is true that the so-called Renaissance followed slowly and by tortuous paths upon the death of Frederick. The Church obtained a complete victory over his family and succeeded in extinguishing the civilization of Sicily. Yet the fame of the emperor who transmitted questions of sceptical philosophy to Arab sages, who conversed familiarly with men of letters, who loved splendor and understood the arts of refined living, survived both long and late in Italy. His power, his wealth, his liberality of soul and lofty aspirations, formed the theme of many a tale and poem. Dante places him in hell among the heresiarchs; and truly the splendor of his supposed infidelity found for him a goodly following. Yet Dante dated the rise of Italian literature from the blooming period of the Sicilian court. Frederick's unorthodoxy proved no drawback to his intellectual influence. More than any other man of mediæval times, he contributed, if only as the memory of a mighty name, to the progress of civilized humanity.

\* It is curious to note that in this year, 1215, the date of *Magna Charta*, Frederick took the Cross at Aix-la-Chapelle.

Let us take leave both of Frederick and of Palermo, that centre of converging influences which was his cradle, in the cathedral where he lies gathered to his fathers. This church, though its rich sunbrowned yellow\* reminds one of the tone of Spanish buildings, is like nothing one has seen elsewhere. Here, even more than at Monreale, the eye is struck with a fusion of styles. The western towers are grouped into something like the clustered sheafs of the Caen churches; the windows present Saracenic arches; the southern porch is covered with foliated incrustations of a late and decorative Gothic style; the exterior of the apse combines Arabic inlaid patterns of black and yellow with the Greek honeysuckle; the western door adds Norman dog-tooth and chevron to the Saracenic billet. Nowhere is any one tradition firmly followed. The whole wavers, and yet is beautiful—like the immature eclecticism of the culture which Frederick himself endeavored to establish in his Southern kingdoms. Inside there is no such harmony of blended voices: all the strange tongues which speak together on the outside, making up a music in which the far North and ancient Byzance and the delicate East sound each a note, are hushed. The frigid silence of the Palladian

\* Nearly all cities have their own distinctive color. That of Venice is a pearly white, suggestive of every hue in delicate abeyance, and that of Florence is a sober brown. Palermo displays a rich yellow ochre passing at the deepest into orange, and at the lightest into primrose. This is the tone of the soil, of sun-stained marble, and of the rough ashlar masonry of the chief buildings. Palermo has none of the glaring whiteness of Naples, nor yet of that parti-colored gradation of tints which adds gayety to the grandeur of Genoa.

style reigns there—simple, indeed, and dignified, but lifeless as the century in which it flourished.

Yet there, in a side chapel near the western door, stand the porphyry sarcophagi which shrine the bones of the Hautevilles and their representatives. There sleeps King Roger—“Dux strenuus et primus Rex Siciliæ”—with his daughter Constance in her purple chest beside him. Henry VI. and Frederick II. and Constance of Aragon complete the group, which surpasses for interest all sepulchral monuments—even the tombs of the Scaligers at Verona except only, perhaps, the statues of the nave of Innspruck. Very sombre and stately are these porphyry resting-places of princes born in the purple, assembled here from lands so distant—from the craggy heights of Hohenstauffen, from the green orchards of Cotentin, from the dry hills of Aragon. They sleep, and the centuries pass by. Rude hands break open the granite lids of their sepulchres to find tresses of yellow hair and fragments of imperial mantles embroidered with the hawks and stags the royal hunter loved. The church in which they lie changes with the change of taste in architecture and the manners of successive ages. But the huge stone arks remain unmoved, guarding their freight of mouldering dust beneath gloomy canopies of stone that temper the sunlight as it streams from the chapel windows.

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## SYRACUSE AND GIRGENTI.

THE traveller in Sicily is constantly reminded of classical history and literature. While tossing, it may be, at anchor in the port of Trapani, and wondering when the tedious Libeccio will release him, he must perforce remember that here *Æneas* instituted the games for Anchises. Here Mnestheus and Gyas and Sergestus and Cloanthus raced their galleys; on yonder little isle the Centaur struck; and that was the rock which received the dripping Menœtes:

Illum et labentem Teucri et risere natantem,  
Et salsos rident revomentem pectore fluctus.

Or crossing a broken bridge at night in the lumbering diligence, guarded by infantry with set bayonets, and wondering on which side of the ravine the brigands are in ambush, he suddenly calls to mind that this torrent was the ancient Halycus, the border between Greeks and Carthaginians, established of old, and ratified by Timoleon after the battle of the Crimisus. Among the bare gray hills of Segeste his thoughts revert to that strange story told by Herodotus of Philippus, the young soldier of Crotona, whose beauty was so great that when the Segestean found him slain among their foes they raised the corpse and burned it on a pyre of honor, and built a hero's temple over the urn that held his ashes. The first sight of *Ætna* makes us cry with Theocritus, *Aītra μῆτερ ἐμά . . .*

*πολυδένδρεος Αἴτρα.* The solemn heights of Castro Giovanni bring lines of Ovid to our lips:

Haud procul Hennæis lacus est a mœnibus altæ  
Nomine Pergus aquæ. Non illo plura Caystros  
Carmina cygnorum labentibus audit in undis.  
Silva coronat aquas, cingens latus omne; suisque  
Frondibus ut velo Phœbeos summovet ignes.  
Frigora dant rami, Tyrios humus humida flores.  
Perpetuum ver est.

We look, indeed, in vain for the leafy covert and the purple flowers that tempted Proserpine. The place is barren now: two solitary cypress-trees mark the road which winds downward from a desolate sulphur mine, and the lake is clearly the crater of an extinct volcano. Yet the voices of old poets are not mute. "The rich Virgilian rustic measure" recalls a long-since buried past. Even among the wavelets of the Faro, we remember Homer scanning the shore if haply somewhere yet may linger the wild fig-tree which saved Ulysses from the whirlpool of Charybdis. At any rate, we cannot but exclaim with Goethe, "Now all these coasts, gulfs, and creeks, islands and peninsulas, rocks and sandbanks, wooded hills, soft meadows, fertile fields, neat gardens, hanging grapes, cloudy mountains, constant cheerfulness of plains, cliffs, and ridges, and the surrounding sea, with such manifold variety are present in my mind; now is the *Odyssey* for the first time become to me a living world."

But, rich as the whole of Sicily may be in classical associations, two places, Syracuse and Girgenti, are pre-eminent for the power of bringing the Greek past forcibly before us. Their interest is of two very different kinds. Girgenti still displays the splendor of temples placed upon a rocky cornice between sea and

olive-groves. Syracuse has nothing to show but the scene of world-important actions. Yet the great deeds recorded by Thucydides, the conflict between eastern and western Hellas which ended in the annihilation of the bright, brief, brilliant reality of Athenian empire, remain so clearly written on the hills and harbors and marsh-lands of Syracuse that no place in the world is topographically more memorable. The artist, whether architect or landscape-painter or poet, finds full enjoyment at Girgenti. The historian must be exacting, indeed, in his requirements if he is not satisfied with Syracuse.

What has become of Syracuse, "the greatest of Greek cities and the fairest of all cities" even in the days of Cicero? Scarcely one stone stands upon another of all those temples and houses. The five towns which were included by the walls have now shrunk to the little island which the first settlers named Ortygia, where the sacred fountain of Arethusa seemed to their home-loving hearts to have followed them from Hellas.\* Nothing survives but a few columns of Athene's temple built into a Christian church, with here and there the marble masonry of a bath or the Roman stone-work of an amphitheatre. There are not even any mounds or deep deposits of rubble mixed with pottery to show that here once a town had been.\*\* *Etiam periere ruineæ.* The vast city, devastated for the last time by the Saracens in 878 A.D., has been reduced to dust and

\* The fountain of Arethusa, recently rescued from the washer-women of Syracuse, is shut off from the Great Harbor by a wall and planted with papyrus. Taste has not been displayed in the bear-pit architecture of its circular enclosure.

\*\* This is not strictly true of Achradina, where some *débris* may still be found worth excavating.

swept by the sirocco into the sea. This is the explanation of its utter ruin. The stone of Syracuse is friable and easily disintegrated. The petulant moist wind of the southeast corrodes its surface, and when it falls it crumbles to powder. Here, then, the elements have had their will unchecked by such sculptured granite as in Egypt resists the mounded sand of the desert, or by such marble colonnades as in Athens have calmly borne the insults of successive sieges. What was hewn out of the solid rock—the semicircle of the theatre, the street of the tombs with its deeply dented chariot-ruts, the gigantic quarries from which the material of the metropolis was scooped, the catacombs which burrow for miles underground—alone prove how mighty must have been the Syracuse of Dionysius. Truly, “the iniquity of oblivion blindly scattered her poppy, and deals with the memory of men without distinction to merit of perpetuity.” Standing on the beach of the Great Harbor or the Bay of Thapsus, we may repeat almost word by word Antipater’s solemn lament over Corinth:

Where is thy splendor now, thy crown of towers,  
Thy beauty visible to all men’s eyes,  
The gold and silver of thy treasures,  
Thy temples of blest gods, the woven bowers  
Where long-stoled ladies walked in tranquil hours,  
Thy multitudes like stars that crowd the skies?  
All, all are gone. Thy desolation lies  
Bare to the night. The elemental powers  
Resume their empire: on this lonely shore  
Thy deathless Nereids, daughters of the sea,  
Wailing ’mid broken stones unceasingly,  
Like halcyons when the restless south winds roar,  
Sing the sad story of thy woes of yore:  
These plunging waves are all that’s left to thee.

Time, however, though he devours his children, cannot utterly destroy the written record of illustrious deeds or the theatre of their enactment. Therefore, with Thucydides in hand, we may still follow the events of that Syracusan siege which decided the destinies of Greece, and, by the fall of Athens, raised Sparta, Macedonia, and finally Rome to the hegemony of the civilized world.

There are few students of Thucydides and Grote who would not be surprised by the small scale of the cliffs, and the gentle incline of Epipolæ—the rising ground above the town of Syracuse, upon the slope of which the principal operations of the Athenian siege took place.\* Maps, and to some extent also the language of Thucydides, who talks of the *προσβάσεις*, or practicable approaches to Epipolæ, and the *κρημνοῖ*, or precipices by which it was separated from the plain, would lead one to suppose that the whole region was on each hand rocky and abrupt. In reality it is extremely difficult to distinguish the rising ground of Epipolæ upon the southern side from the plain, so very gradual is the line of ascent and so comparatively even is the rocky surface of the hill. Thucydides, in narrating the night attack of Demosthenes upon the lines of Gylippus (book vii. 43-45), lays stress upon the necessity of approaching Epipolæ from the western

\* Epipolæ is in shape a pretty regular isosceles triangle, of which the apex is Mongibellisi or Euryalus, and the base Achradina or the northern quarter of the ancient city. Thucydides describes it as *χωρίον ἀποκρήμνου τε καὶ υπέρ τῆς πόλεως εὐθὺς κειμένου . . . ἐξήρτηται γάρ τὸ ἄλλο χωρίον καὶ μέχρι τῆς πόλεως ἐπικλινεῖς τέ ἔστι καὶ ἐπιφανεῖς πᾶν εἶσον καὶ ὀνόμασται ὑπὸ τῶν Συρακουσιῶν διὰ τὸ ἐπιπολῆς τοῦ ἄλλου εἶναι Ἐπιπολαῖ* (vii. 96).

side by Euryalus, and again asserts that during the hurried retreat of the Athenians great numbers died by leaping from the cliffs, while still more had to throw away their armor. At this time the Athenian army was encamped upon the shore of the Great Harbor, and held trenches and a wall that stretched from that side at least half way across Epipolæ. It seems therefore strange that, unless their movements were impeded by counterworks and lines of walls, of which we have no information, the troops of Demosthenes should not, at least in their retreat, have been able to pour down over the gentle descent of Epipolæ towards the Anapus, instead of returning to Euryalus. Anyhow, we can scarcely discern cliffs of more than ten feet upon the southern slope of Epipolæ, nor can we understand why the Athenians should have been forced to take these in their line of retreat. There must have been some artificial defences of which we read nothing, and of which no traces now remain, but which were sufficient to prevent them from choosing their ground. Slight difficulties of this kind raise the question whether the wonderful clearness of Thucydides in detail was really the result of personal observation, or whether his graphic style enabled him to give the appearance of scrupulous accuracy. I incline to think that the author of the sixth and seventh books of the History must have visited Syracuse, and that if we could see his own map of Epipolæ we should better be able to understand the difficulties of the backward night march of Demosthenes, by discovering that there was some imperative necessity for not descending, as seems natural, upon the open slope of the hill to the south. The position of Euryalus at the extreme point

called Mongibellisi is clear enough. Here the ground, which has been continually rising from the plateau of Achradina (the northern suburb of Syracuse), comes to an abrupt finish. Between Mongibellisi and the Belvedere hill beyond there is a deep depression, and the slope to Euryalus either from the south or north is gradual. It was a gross piece of neglect on the part of Nikias not to have fortified this spot on his first investment of Epipolæ, instead of choosing Labdalum, which, wherever we may place it, must have been lower down the hill to the east. For Euryalus is the key to Epipolæ. It was here that Nikias himself ascended in the first instance, and that afterwards he permitted Gylippus to enter and raise the siege, and lastly that Demosthenes, by overpowering the insufficient Syracusan guard, got at night within the lines of the Spartan general. Thus the three most important movements of the siege were made upon Euryalus. Dionysius, when he enclosed Epipolæ with walls, recognized the value of the point, and fortified it with the castle which remains, and to which, as Colonel Leake believes, Archimedes, at the order of Hiero II., made subsequent additions. This castle is one of the most interesting Greek ruins extant. A little repair would make it even now a substantial place of defence, according to Greek tactics. Its deep foss is cut in the solid rock, and furnished with subterranean magazines for the storage of provisions. The three piles of solid masonry on which the drawbridge rested still stand in the centre of this ditch. The oblique grand entrance to the foss descends by a flight of well-cut steps. The rock itself over which the fort was raised is honey-combed with excavated passages

for infantry and cavalry, of different width and height, so that one sort can be assigned to mounted horsemen and another to foot-soldiers. The trap-doors which led from these galleries into the fortress are provided with rests for ladders, that could be let down to help a sallying force, or drawn up to impede an advancing enemy. The inner court for stabled horses and the stations for the catapults are still in tolerable preservation. Thus the whole arrangement of the stronghold can be traced, not dimly, but distinctly. Being placed on the left side of the chief gate of Epipolæ, the occupants of the fort could issue to attack a foe advancing towards that gate in the rear. At the same time the subterranean galleries enabled them to pour out upon the other side, if the enemy had forced an entrance, while the minor passages and trap-doors provided a retreat in case the garrison were over-powered in one of their offensive operations. The view from Euryalus is extensive. To the left rises *Ætna*, snowy, solitary, broadly vast, above the plain of Catania, the curving shore, Thapsus, and the sea. Syracuse itself, a thin white line between the harbor and the open sea, a dazzling streak between two blues, terminates the slope of Epipolæ, and on the right hand stretch the marshes of Anapus, rich with vines and hoary with olives.

By far the most interesting localities of Syracuse are the Great Harbor and the stone-quarries. When the sluggish policy and faint heart of Nikias had brought the Athenians to the verge of ruin, when Gyllippus had entered the besieged city, and Plemmyrium had been wrested from the invaders, and Demosthenes had failed in his attack upon Epipolæ, and the blockad-

ing trenches had been finally evacuated, no hope remained for the armament of Athens except only in retreat by water. They occupied a palisaded encampment upon the shore of the harbor, between the mouth of the Anapus and the city; whence they attempted to force their way with their galleys to the open sea. Hitherto the Athenians had been supreme upon their own element; but now the Syracusans adopted tactics suited to the narrow basin in which the engagements had to take place. Building their vessels with heavy beaks, they crushed the lighter craft of the Athenians, which had no room for flank movements and rapid evolutions. A victory was thus obtained by the Syracusan navy; the harbor was blockaded with chains by the order of Gylippus; the Athenians were driven back to their palisades upon the fever-haunted shore. Their only chance seemed to depend upon a renewal of the sea-fight in the harbor. The supreme moment arrived. What remained of the Athenian fleet, in numbers still superior to that of their enemies, steered straight for the mouth of the harbor. The Syracusans advanced from the naval stations of Ortygia to meet them. The shore was thronged with spectators, Syracusans tremulous with the expectation of a decisive success, Athenians on the tenter-hooks of hope and dread. In a short time the harbor became a confused mass of clashing triremes; the water beaten into bloody surf by banks of oars; the air filled with shouts from the combatants and exclamations from the looker-on: *όλο-  
γυμός, βοή, τικώντες, κρατούμενοι, ἀλλα ὅσα ἐν μεγάλῳ  
κινδύνῳ μέγα στρατόπεδον πολνιδῆ ἀναγκάζοντο φεύγ-  
γεσθαι.* Then after a struggle, in which desperation gave energy to the Athenians, and ambitious hope in-

spired their foes with more than wonted vigor, the fleet of the Athenians was finally overwhelmed. The whole scene can be reproduced with wonderful distinctness; for the low shores of Plemmyrium, the city of Ortygia, the marsh of Lysimcleia, the hills above the Anapus, and the distant dome of *Aetna* are the same as they were upon that memorable day. Nothing has disappeared except the temple of *Zeus Olympius* and the buildings of Temenitis.

What followed upon the night of that defeat is less easily realized. Thucydides, however, by one touch reveals the depth of despair to which the Athenians had sunk. They neglected to rescue the bodies of their dead from the Great Harbor, or to ask for a truce, according to hallowed Greek usage, in order that they might perform the funeral rites. To such an extent was the army demoralized. Meanwhile within the city the Syracusans kept high festival, honoring their patron Herakles, upon whose day it happened that the battle had been fought. Nikias neglected this opportunity of breaking up his camp and retiring unmolested into the interior of the island. When after the delay of two nights and a day he finally began to move, the Syracusans had blockaded the roads. How his own division capitulated by the blood-stained banks of the Asinarus after a six days' march of appalling misery, and how that of Demosthenes surrendered in the olive field of Polyzelus, is too well known.

One of the favorite excursions from modern Syracuse takes the traveller in a boat over the sandy bar of the Anapus, beneath the old bridge which joined the Helorine road to the city, and up the river to its junction with the Cyane. This is the ground traversed

by the army, first in their attempted flight, and then in their return as captives to Syracuse. Few, perhaps, who visit the spot, think as much of that last act in a world-historical tragedy, as of the picturesque compositions made by arundo donax, castor-oil plant, yellow flags, and papyrus, on the river-banks and promontories. Like miniature palm-groves these water-weeds stand green and golden against the bright blue sky, feathering above the boat which slowly pushes its way through clinging reeds. The huge red oxen of Sicily in the marsh on either hand toss their spreading horns and canter off knee-deep in ooze. Then comes the fountain of Cyane, a broad round well of water, thirty feet in depth, but quite clear, so that you can see the pebbles at the bottom and fishes swimming to and fro among the weeds. Papyrus-plants edge the pool; thick and tufted, they are exactly such as one sees carved or painted upon Egyptian architecture of the Ptolemaic period.

With Thucydides still in hand, before quitting Syracuse we must follow the Athenian captives to their prison-grave. The Latomia de' Cappuccini is a place which it is impossible to describe in words, and of which no photographs give any notion. Sunk to the depth of a hundred feet below the level of the soil, with sides perpendicular and in many places as smooth as though the chisel had just passed over them, these vast excavations produce the impression of some huge subterranean gallery, widening here and there into spacious halls, the whole of which has been unroofed and opened to the air of heaven. It is a solemn and romantic labyrinth, where no wind blows rudely, and where orange-trees shoot upward luxuriantly to meet

the light. The wild fig bursts from the living rock, mixed with lentisk-shrubs and pendent caper-plants. Old olives split the masses of fallen cliff with their tough, snake-like, slowly corded and compacted roots. Thin flames of pomegranate-flowers gleam amid foliage of lustrous green; and lemons drop unheeded from femininely fragile branches. There, too, the ivy hangs in long festoons, waving like tapestry to the breath of stealthy breezes; while under foot is a tangle of acanthus, thick curling leaves of glossiest green, surmounted by spikes of dull lilac-blossoms. Wedges and columns and sharp teeth of the native rock rear themselves here and there in the midst of the open spaces to the sky, worn fantastically into notches and saws by the action of sirocco. A light yellow calcined by the sun to white is the prevailing color of the quarries. But in shady places the limestone takes a curious pink tone of great beauty, like the interior of some sea-shells. The reflected lights, too, and half-shadows in their scooped-out chambers, make a wonderful natural chiaroscuro. The whole scene is now more picturesque in a sublime and grandiose style than forbidding. There is even one spot planted with magenta-colored mesembrianthemums of dazzling brightness; and the air is loaded with the drowsy perfume of lemon-blossoms. Yet this is the scene of a great agony. This garden was once the Gethsemane of a nation, where nine thousand free men of the proudest city of Greece were brought by an unexampled stroke of fortune to slavery, shame, and a miserable end. Here they dwindled away, worn out by wounds, disease, thirst, hunger, heat by day and cold by night, heart-sickness, and the insufferable stench of putrefying corpses. The

pupils of Socrates, the admirers of Euripides, the orators of the Pnyx, the athletes of the Lyceum, lovers and comrades and philosophers, died here like dogs; and the dames of Syracuse stood doubtless on those parapets above, and looked upon them like wild beasts. What the Gorgo of Theocritus might have said to her friend Praxinoe on the occasion would be the subject for an idyl *à la* Browning! How often, pining in those great glaring pits, which were not then curtained with ivy or canopied by olive-trees, must the Athenians have thought with vain remorse of their own Rhamnusian Nemesis, the goddess who held scales adverse to the hopes of men, and bore the legend "Be not lifted up!" How often must they have watched the dawn walk forth fire-footed upon the edge of those bare crags, or the stars slide from east to west across the narrow space of sky! How they must have envied the unfettered clouds sailing in liquid ether, or traced the far flight of hawk and swallow, sighing, "Oh that I too had the wings of a bird!" The weary eyes turned upward found no change or respite, save what the frost of night brought to the fire of day, and the burning sun to the pitiless cold constellations.

A great painter, combining Doré's power over space and distance with the distinctness of Flaxman's design and the coloring of Alma Tadema, might possibly realize this agony of the Athenian captives in the stone-quarries. The time of day chosen for the picture should be full noon, with its glare of light and sharply defined vertical shadows. The crannies in the straight sides of the quarry should here and there be tufted with a few dusty creepers and wild fig-trees. On the edge of the sky-line stand parties of Syracusan citizens

with their wives and children (shaded by umbrellas), richly dressed, laughing and triumphing over the misery beneath. In the full foreground there are placed two figures. A young Athenian has just died of fever. His body lies stretched along the ground, the head resting on a stone, and the face turned to the sky. Beside him kneels an older warrior, sunburnt and dry with thirst, but full as yet of vigor. He stares with wide despair-smitten eyes straight out, as though he had lately been stretched upon the corpse, but had risen at the sound of movement, or some supposed word of friends close by. His bread lies untasted near him, and the half-pint of water—his day's portion—has been given to bathe the forehead of his dying friend. They have stood together through the festival of leave-taking from Peiræus, through the battles of Epipolæ, through the retreat and the slaughter at the passage of the Asinarus. But now it has come to this, and death has found the younger. Perhaps the friend beside him remembers some cool wrestling-ground in far-off Athens, or some procession up the steps of the Acropolis, where first they met. Anyhow his fixed gaze now shows that he has passed in thought at least beyond the hell around him. Not far behind should be ranged groups of haggard men, with tattered clothes and dulled or tigerish eyes, some dignified, some broken down by grief; while here and there newly fallen corpses, and in one hideous corner a great heap of abandoned dead, should point the ghastly words of Thucydides: *τῶν νεκρῶν ὁμοῦ ἐπ' ἀλλήλοις ξυννευημένων.*

Every landscape has some moment of its own at which it should be seen for the first time. Mediæval

cities, with their narrow streets and solemn spires, demand the twilight of a summer night. Mediterranean islands show their best in the haze of afternoon, when sea and sky and headland are bathed in aerial blue, and the mountains seem to be made of transparent amethyst. The first sight of the Alps should be taken at sunset from some point of vantage, like the terrace at Berne, or the castle walls of Salzburg. If these fortunate moments be secured, all after-knowledge of locality and detail serves to fortify and deepen the impression of picturesque harmony. The mind has then conceived a leading thought, which gives ideal unity to scattered memories and invests the crude reality with an æsthetic beauty. The lucky moment for the landscape of Girgenti is half an hour past sunset in a golden after-glow. Landing at the port named after Empedocles, having caught from the sea some glimpses of temple-fronts emergent on green hill-slopes among almond-trees, with Pindar's epithet of "splendor-loving" in my mind, I rode on such an evening up the path which leads across the Drago to Girgenti. The way winds through deep-sunk lanes of rich amber sandstone, hedged with cactus and dwarf-palm, and set with old gnarled olive-trees. As the sunlight faded, Venus shone forth in a luminous sky, and the deep yellows and purples overhead seemed to mingle with the heavy scent of orange-flowers from scarcely visible groves by the roadside. Saffron in the west and violet in the east met midway, composing a translucent atmosphere of mellow radiance, like some liquid gem—*dolce color d'oriental berillo*. Girgenti, far off and far up, gazing seaward, and rearing her topaz colored bastions into that gorgeous twilight, shone like the

aerial vision of cities seen in dreams or imaged in the clouds. Hard and sharp against the sallow line of sunset leaned grotesque shapes of cactuses like hydras, and delicate silhouettes of young olive-trees like sylphs: the river ran silver in the hollow, and the mountain-side on which the town is piled was solid gold. Then came the dirty dull interior of Girgenti, misnamed the magnificent. But no disenchantment could destroy the memory of that vision, and Pindar's *φιλάγλαος Ἀζράγας* remains in my mind a reality.\*

The temples of Girgenti are at the distance of two miles from the modern town. Placed upon the edge of an irregular plateau which breaks off abruptly into cliffs of moderate height below them, they stand in a magnificent row between the sea and plain on one side, and the city and the hills upon the other. Their color is that of dusky honey or dun amber; for they are not built of marble, but of sandstone, which at some not very distant geological period must have been a sea-bed. Oyster and scallop shells are imbedded in the roughly hewn masonry, while here and there patches of a red deposit, apparently of broken coralline, make the surface crimson. The vegetation against which the ruined colonnades are relieved consists almost wholly of almond and olive trees, the bright green foliage of the one mingling with the grays of the other, and both enhancing the warm tints of the

\* Lest I should seem to have overstated the splendor of this sunset view, I must remark that the bare dry landscape of the South is peculiarly fortunate in such effects. The local tint of the Girgenti rock is yellow. The vegetation on the hillside is sparse. There is nothing to prevent the colors of the sky being reflected upon the vast amber-tinted surface, which then glows with indescribable glory.

stone. This contrast of colors is very agreeable to the eye; yet when the temples were perfect it did not exist. There is no doubt that their surface was coated with a fine stucco, wrought to smoothness, toned like marble, and painted over with the blue and red and green decorations proper to the Doric style. This fact is a practical answer to those aesthetic critics who would fain establish that the Greeks practised no deception in their arts. The whole effect of the colonnades of Selinus and Girgenti must have been an illusion, and their surface must have needed no less constant reparation than the exterior of a Gothic cathedral. The sham jewelry frequently found in Greek tombs, and the curious mixture of marble with sand-stone in the sculptures from Selinus, are other instances that Greeks no less than modern artists condescended to trickery for the sake of effect. In the series of the metopes from Selinus now preserved in the museum at Palermo, the flesh of the female persons is represented by white marble, while that of the men, together with the dresses and other accessories, is wrought of common stone. Yet the bass-reliefs in which this peculiarity occurs belong to the best period of Greek sculpture, and the groups are not unworthy for spirit and design to be placed by the side of the metopes of the Parthenon. Most beautiful, for example, is the contrast between the young unarmed Hercules and the Amazon he overpowers. His naked man's foot grasps with the muscular energy of an athlete her soft and helpless woman's foot, the roughness of the sandstone and the smoothness of the marble really heightening the effect of difference.

Though ranged in a row along the same cornice,

the temples of Girgenti, originally at least six in number, were not so disposed that any of their architectural lines should be exactly parallel. The Greeks disliked formality; the carefully calculated *asymmetreia* in the disposition of their groups of buildings secured variety of effect as well as a broken surface for the display of light and shadow. This is very noticeable on the Acropolis of Athens, where, however regular may be the several buildings, all are placed at different angles to each other and the hill. Only two of the Girgenti temples survive in any degree of perfection—the so-called Concordia and the Juno Lacinia. The rest are but mere heaps of mighty ruins, with here and there a broken column, and in one place an angle of a pediment raised upon a group of pillars. The foundations of masonry which supported them and the drums of their gigantic columns are tufted with wild palm, aloe, asphodel, and crimson snap-dragon. Yellow-blossoming sage and mint and lavender and mignonette sprout in the crevices where snakes and lizards harbor. The grass around is gemmed with blue pimpernel and convolvulus. Gladiolus springs amid the young corn-blades beneath the almond-trees; while a beautiful little iris makes the most unpromising dry places brilliant with its delicate grays and blues. In cooler and damper hollows, around the boles of old olives and under ruined arches, flourishes the tender acanthus, and the roadsides are gaudy with a yellow daisy flower, which may perchance be the *ελύρων* of Theocritus. Thus the whole scene is a wilderness of brightness, less radiant but more touching than when processions of men and maidens bearing urns and laurel-branches, crowned with ivy or with myrtle, paced

along those sandstone roads, chanting pæans and prosodial hymns, towards the glistening porches and hyæthral cells.

The only temple about the name of which can be no doubt, is that of Zeus Olympius. A prostrate giant who once with nineteen of his fellows helped to support the roof of this enormous fane, and who now lies in pieces among the asphodels, remains to prove that this was the building begun by the Agrigentines after the defeat of the Phœnicians at the Himera, when slaves were many and spoil was abundant, and Hellas both in Sicily and on the mainland felt a more than usual thrill of gratitude to their ancestral deity. The greatest architectural works of the island, the temples of Segeste and Selinus as well as those of Girgenti, were begun between this period and the Carthaginian invasion of 409 B.C. The victory of the Hellenes over the barbarians in 480 B.C., symbolized in the victory of Zeus over the enslaved Titans of this temple, gave a vast impulse to their activity and wealth. After the disastrous incursion of the same foes seventy years later, the western Greek towns of the island received a check from which they never recovered. Many of their noblest buildings remained unfinished. The question which rises to the lips of all who contemplate the ruins of this gigantic temple and its compeer dedicated to Heracles is this: Who wrought the destruction of works so solid and enduring? For what purpose of spite or interest were those vast columns—in the very flutings of which a man can stand with ease—felled like forest pines? One sees the mighty pillars lying as they sank, like swaths beneath the mower's scythe. Their basements are still in line. The drums

which composed them have fallen asunder, but maintain their original relation to each other on the ground. Was it earthquake or the hand of man that brought them low? Poggio Bracciolini tells us that in the fifteenth century they were burning the marble buildings of the Roman Campagna for lime. We know that the Senator Brancaleone made havoc among the classic monuments occupied as fortresses by Frangipani and Savelli and Orsini. We understand how the Farnesi should have quarried the Coliseum for their palace. But here, at the distance of three miles from Girgenti, in a comparative desert, what army, or what band of ruffians, or what palace-builders could have found it worth their while to devastate mere mountains of sculptured sandstone? The Romans invariably respected Greek temples. The early Christians used them for churches—and this accounts for the comparative perfection of the Concordia. It was in the age of the Renaissance that the ruin of Girgenti's noblest monuments occurred. The temple of Zeus Olympius was shattered in the fifteenth century, and in the next its fragments were used to build a breakwater. The demolition of such substantial edifices is as great a wonder as their construction. We marvel at the energy which must have been employed on their overthrow no less than at the art which raised such blocks of stone and placed them in position.

While so much remains both at Syracuse and at Girgenti to recall the past, we are forced here, as at Athens, to feel how very little we really know about Greek life. We cannot bring it up before our fancy with any clearness, but rather in a sort of hazy dream, from which some luminous points emerge. The en-

trance of an Olympian victor through the breach in the city walls of Girgenti, the procession of citizens conducting old Timoleon in his chariot to the theatre, the conferences of the younger Dionysius with Plato in his guarded palace-fort, the stately figure of Empedocles presiding over incantations in the marshes of Selinus, the austerity of Dion and his mystic dream, the first appearance of stubborn Gylippus with long Lace-dæmonian hair in the theatre of Syracuse—such picturesque pieces of history we may fairly well recapture. But what were the daily occupations of the Simætha of Theocritus? What was the state-dress of the splendid Queen Philistis, whose name may yet be read upon her seat, and whose face adorns the coins of Syracuse? How did the great altar of Zeus look, when the oxen were being slaughtered there by hundreds, in a place which must have been shambles and meat-market and temple all in one? What scene of architectural splendor met the eyes of the swimmers in the Piscina of Girgenti? How were the long hours of so many days of leisure occupied by the Greeks, who had each three pillows to his head in “splendor-loving Acragas?” Of what sort was the hospitality of Gellias? Questions like these rise up to tantalize us with the hopelessness of ever truly recovering the life of a lost race. After all the labor of antiquary and the poet, nothing remains to be uttered but such moralizings as Sir Thomas Browne poured forth over the urns discovered at Old Walsingham: “What time the persons of these ossuaries entered the famous nations of the dead, and slept with princes and counsellors, might admit a wide solution. But who were the proprietaries of these bones, or what bodies these ashes made up, were a

question above antiquarism; not to be resolved by man, nor easily perhaps by spirits except we consult the provincial guardians, or tutelary observators." Death reigns over the peoples of the past, and we must fain be satisfied to cry with Raleigh: "O eloquent, just, and mighty Death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised: thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of men, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *hic jacet*." Even so. Yet while the cadence of this august rhetoric is yet in our ears, another voice is heard as of the angel seated by a void and open tomb, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" The spirit of Hellas is indestructible, however much the material existence of the Greeks be lost beyond recovery; for the life of humanity is not many but one, not parcelled into separate moments, but continuous.

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## AMALFI, PÆSTUM, CAPRI.

THE road between Vietri and Amalfi is justly celebrated as one of the most lovely pieces of coast scenery in Italy. Its only rivals are the roads from Castellamare to Sorrento, from Genoa to Sestri, and from Nice to Mentone. Each of these has its own charm; and yet their similarity is sufficient to invite comparison: under the spell of each in turn we are inclined to say, This then, at all events, is the most

beautiful. On first quitting Vietri, Salerno is left low down upon the sea-shore, nestling into a little corner of the bay which bears its name, and backed up by gigantic mountains. With each onward step these mountain-ranges expand in long aerial line, revealing reaches of fantastic peaks, that stretch away beyond the plain of Pæstum, till they end at last in mist and sunbeams shimmering on the sea. On the left hand hangs the cliff above the deep salt water, with here and there a fig-tree spreading fanlike leaves against the blue beneath. On the right rises the hill-side, clothed with myrtle, lentisk, cistus, and pale yellow coronilla—a tangle as sweet with scent as it is gay with blossom. Over the parapet that skirts the precipice lean heavy-foliaged locust-trees, and the terraces in sunny nooks are set with lemon-orchards. There are but few olives, and no pines. Meanwhile each turn in the road brings some change of scene: now a village with its little beach of gray sand, lapped by clearest sea-waves, where bare-legged fishermen mend their nets, and naked boys bask like lizards in the sun; now towering bastions of weird rock, broken into spires and pinnacles like those of Skye, and colored with bright hues of red and orange; then a ravine, where the thin thread of a mountain streamlet seems to hang suspended upon ferny ledges in the limestone—or a precipice defined in profile against sea and sky, with a lad, half dressed in goat-skin, dangling his legs into vacuity and singing—or a tract of cultivation, where the orange, apricot, and lemon trees nestle together upon terraces with intermingled pergolas of vines.

Amalfi and Atrani lie close together in two of these ravines, the mountains almost arching over them,

and the sea washing their very house-walls. Each has its crowning campanile; but that of Amalfi is the stranger of the two, like a Moorish tower at the top, and colored with green and yellow tiles that glitter in the sunlight. The houses are all dazzling white, plastered against the naked rock, rising on each other's shoulders to get a glimpse of earth and heaven, jutting out on coigns of vantage from the toppling cliff, and pierced with staircases as dark as night at noonday. Some frequented lanes lead through the basements of these houses; and as the donkeys pick their way from step to step in the twilight, bare-chested macaroni-makers crowd forth like ants to see us strangers pass. A myriad of swallows or a swarm of mason-bees might build a town like this.

It is not easy to imagine the time when Amalfi and Atrani were one town, with docks and arsenals and harborage for their associated fleets, and when these little communities were second in importance to no naval power of Christian Europe. The Byzantine Empire lost its hold on Italy during the eighth century; and after this time the history of Calabria is mainly concerned with the republics of Naples and Amalfi, their conflict with the Lombard dukes of Benevento, their opposition to the Saracens, and their final subjugation by Norman conquerors of Sicily. Between the year 839 A.D., when Amalfi freed itself from the control of Naples and the yoke of Benevento, and the year 1131, when Roger of Hauteville incorporated the republic in his kingdom of the Two Sicilies, this city was the foremost naval and commercial port of Italy. The burghers of Amalfi elected their own doge; founded the Hospital of Jerusalem, whence sprang

the knightly order of St. John; gave their name to the richest quarter in Palermo; and owned trading establishments or factories in all the chief cities of the Levant. Their gold coinage of *tari* formed the standard of currency before the Florentines had stamped the lily and St. John upon the Tuscan florin. Their shipping regulations supplied Europe with a code of maritime laws. Their scholars, in the darkest depth of the dark ages, prized and conned a famous copy of the Pandects of Justinian; and their seamen deserved the fame of having first used, if they did not actually invent, the compass.

To modern visitors those glorious centuries of Amalfitan power and independence cannot but seem fabulous; so difficult is it for us to imagine the conditions of society in Europe when a tiny city, shut in between barren mountains and a tideless sea, without a circumjacent territory, and with no resources but piracy or trade, could develop maritime supremacy in the Levant and produce the first fine flowers of liberty and culture.

If the history of Amalfi's early splendor reads like a brilliant legend, the story of its premature extinction has the interest of a tragedy. The republic had grown and flourished on the decay of the Greek Empire. When the hard-handed race of Hauteville absorbed the heritage of Greeks and Lombards and Saracens in Southern Italy, these adventurers succeeded in annexing Amalfi. But it was not their interest to extinguish the state. On the contrary, they relied for assistance upon the navies and the armies of the little commonwealth. New powers had meanwhile arisen in the North of Italy, who were jealous of rivalry upon the

open seas; and when the Neapolitans resisted King Roger in 1135, they called Pisa to their aid, and sent her fleet to destroy Amalfi. The ships of Amalfi were on guard with Roger's navy in the Bay of Naples. The armed citizens were, under Roger's orders, at Aversa. Meanwhile the home of the republic lay defenceless on its mountain-girdled seaboard. The Pisans sailed into the harbor, sacked the city, and carried off the famous Pandects of Justinian as a trophy. Two years later they returned, to complete the work of devastation. Amalfi never recovered from the injuries and the humiliation of these two attacks. It was ever thus that the Italians, like the children of the dragon's teeth which Cadmus sowed, consumed each other. Pisa cut the throat of her sister-port Amalfi, and Genoa gave a mortal wound to Pisa, when the waters of Meloria were dyed with blood in 1284. Venice fought a duel to the death with Genoa in the succeeding century; and what Venice failed to accomplish was completed by Milan and the lords of the Visconti dynasty, who crippled and enslaved the haughty queen of the Ligurian Riviera.

The naval and commercial prosperity of Amalfi was thus put an end to by the Pisans in the twelfth century. But it was not then that the town assumed its present aspect. What surprises the student of history more than anything is the total absence of fortifications, docks, arsenals, and breakwaters, bearing witness to the ancient grandeur of a city which numbered fifty thousand inhabitants, and traded with Alexandria, Syria, and the far East. Nothing of the sort, with the exception of a single solitary tower upon the Monte Aureo, is visible. Nor will he fail to re-

member that Amalfi and Atrani, which are now divided by a jutting mountain buttress, were once joined by a tract of sea-beach, where the galleys of the republic rested after sweeping the Levant, and where the fishermen drew up their boats upon the smooth gray sand. That also has disappeared. The violence of man was not enough to reduce Amalfi to its present state of insignificance. The forces of nature aided—partly by the gradual subsidence of the land, which caused the lower quarters of the city to be submerged, and separated Amalfi from her twin-port by covering the beach with water—partly by a fearful tempest, accompanied by earthquake, in 1343. Petrarch, then resident at Naples, witnessed the destructive fury of this great convulsion, and the description he wrote of it soon after its occurrence is so graphic that some notice may well be taken of it here.

His letter, addressed to the noble Roman Giovanni Colonna, begins with a promise to tell something of a storm which deserved the title of “poetic,” and in a degree so superlative that no epithet but “Homeric” would suffice to do it justice. This exordium is singularly characteristic of Petrarch, who never forgot that he was a literary man, and lost no opportunity of dragging the great names of antiquity into his rhetorical compositions. The catastrophe was hardly unexpected; for it had been prophesied by an astrological bishop, whom Petrarch does not name, that Naples would be overwhelmed by a terrible disaster in December, 1343. The people were, therefore, in a state of wild anxiety, repenting of their sins, planning a total change of life under the fear of imminent death, and neglecting their ordinary occupations. On the

day of the predicted calamity women roamed in trembling crowds through the streets, pressing their babies to their breasts, and besieging the altars of the saints with prayers. Petrarch, who shared the general disquietude, kept watching the signs of the weather; but nothing happened to warrant an extraordinary panic. At sunset the sky was quieter than usual; and he could discern none of the symptoms of approaching tempest, to which his familiarity with the mountains of Vaucluse accustomed him. After dusk he stationed himself at a window to observe the moon until she went down, before midnight, obscured by clouds. Then he betook himself to bed; but scarcely had he fallen into his first sleep when a most horrible noise aroused him. The whole house shook; the night-light on his table was extinguished; and he was thrown with violence from his couch. He was lodging in a convent; and soon after this first intimation of the tempest he heard the monks calling to each other through the darkness. From cell to cell they hurried, the ghastly gleams of lightning falling on their terror-stricken faces. Headed by the Prior, and holding crosses and reliques of the saints in their hands, they now assembled in Petrarch's chamber. Thence they proceeded in a body to the chapel, where they spent the night in prayer and expectation of impending ruin. It would be impossible, says the poet, to relate terrors of that hellish night—the deluges of rain, the screaming of the wind, the earthquake, the thunder, the howling of the sea, and the shrieks of agonizing human beings. All these horrors were prolonged, as though by some magician's spell, for what seemed twice the duration of a natural night. It was so dark that at last by con-

jecture rather than the testimony of their senses they knew that day had broken. A hurried mass was said. Then, as the noise in the town above them began to diminish, and a confused clamor from the sea-shore continually increased, their suspense became unendurable. They mounted their horses, and descended to the port—to see and perish. A fearful spectacle awaited them. The ships in the harbor had broken their moorings, and were crashing helplessly together. The strand was strewn with mutilated corpses. The breakwaters were submerged, and the sea seemed gaining momently upon the solid land. A thousand watery mountains surged up into the sky between the shore and Capri; and these massive billows were not black or purple, but hoary with a livid foam. After describing some picturesque episodes—such as the gathering of the knights of Naples to watch the ruin of their city, the procession of court ladies headed by the queen to implore the intercession of Mary, and the wreck of a vessel freighted with four hundred convicts bound for Sicily—Petrarch concludes with a fervent prayer that he may never have to tempt the sea, of whose fury he had seen so awful an example.

The capital on this occasion escaped the ruin prophesied. But Amalfi was inundated; and what the waters then gained has never been restored to man. This is why the once so famous city ranks now upon a level with quiet little towns whose names are hardly heard in history—with San Remo or Rapallo or Chiavari—and yet it is still as full of life as a wasp's nest, especially upon the molo, or raised piazza paved with bricks, in front of the *Albergo de' Cappuccini*. The changes of scene upon this tiny square are so frequent

as to remind one of a theatre. Looking down from the inn-balcony, between the glazy green pots gay with scarlet amaryllis-bloom, we are inclined to fancy that the whole has been prepared for our amusement. In the morning the corn for the macaroni-flour, after being washed, is spread out on the bricks to dry. In the evening the city magnates promenade and whisper. Dark-eyed women, with orange or crimson kerchiefs for head-gear, cross and recross, bearing baskets on their shoulders. Great, lazy, large-limbed fellows, girt with scarlet sashes and finished off with dark-blue nightcaps (for a contrast to their saffron-colored shirts, white breeches, and sunburnt calves), slouch about or sleep face downward on the parapets. On either side of this same molo stretches a miniature beach of sand and pebble, covered with nets, which the fishermen are always mending, and where the big boats lade or unlade, trimming for the sardine fishery, or driving in to shore with a whirr of oars and a jabber of discordant voices. As the land-wind freshens, you may watch them set off one by one, like pigeons taking flight, till the sea is flecked with twenty sail all scudding in the same direction. The torrent runs beneath the molo, and finds the sea beyond it; so that here, too, are the washerwomen, chattering like sparrows; and everywhere the naked boys, like brown sea-urchins, burrow in the clean warm sand, or splash the shallow brine. If you like the fun, you may get a score of them to dive together and scramble for coppers in the deeper places, their lithe bodies gleaming wan beneath the water in a maze of interlacing arms and legs.

Over the whole busy scene rise the gray hills, soaring into blueness of air-distance, turreted here and

there with ruined castles, capped with parti-colored campanili and white convents, and tufted through their whole height with the orange and the emerald of the great tree-spurge, and with the live gold of the blossoming broom. It is difficult to say when this picture is most beautiful—whether in the early morning, when the boats are coming back from their night-toil upon the sea, and along the headlands in the fresh light lie swaths of fleecy mist, betokening a still, hot day; or at noon-tide, when the houses on the hill stand, tinted pink and yellow, shadowless-like gems, and the great caruba-trees above the tangles of vines and figs are blots upon the steady glare; or at sunset, when violet and rose, reflected from the eastern sky, make all these terraces and peaks translucent with a wondrous glow. The best of all, perhaps, is night, with a full moon hanging high overhead. Who shall describe the silhouettes of boats upon the shore or sleeping on the misty sea? On the horizon lies a dusky film of brownish golden haze, between the moon and the glimmering water; and here and there a lamp or candle burns with a deep red. Then is the time to take a boat and row upon the bay, or, better, to swim out into the waves and trouble the reflections from the steady stars. The mountains, clear and calm, with light-irradiated chasms and hard shadows cast upon the rock, soar up above a city built of alabaster, or sea-foam, or summer clouds. The whole is white and wonderful: no similes suggest an analogue for the lustre, solid and transparent, of Amalfi nestling in moonlight between the gray-blue sea and lucid hills. Stars stand on all the peaks, and twinkle, or keep gliding, as the boat moves, down the craggy sides. Stars are mirrored on the

marble of the sea, until one knows not whether the oar has struck sparks from a star image or has scattered diamonds of phosphorescent brine.

All this reads like a rhapsody; but indeed it is difficult not to be rhapsodical when a May night of Amalfi is in the memory, with the echo of rich baritone voices chanting Neapolitan songs to a mandoline. It is fashionable to complain that these Italian airs are opera-tunes; but this is only another way of saying that the Italian opera is the genuine outgrowth of national melody, and that Weber was not the first, as some German critics have supposed, to string together *Volkslieder* for the stage. Northerners, who have never seen or felt the beauty of the South, talk sad nonsense about the superiority of German over Italian music. It is true that much Italian music is out of place in Northern Europe, where we seem to need more travail of the intellect in art. But the Italians are rightly satisfied with such facile melody and such simple rhythms as harmonize with sea and sky and boon earth sensuously beautiful. "Perchè pensa? Pensando s'invecchia," expresses the same habit of mind as another celebrated saying, "La musica è il lamento dell' amore o la preghiera agli Dei." Whatever may be the value of Italian music, it is in concord with such a scene as Amalfi by moonlight; and he who does not appreciate this, no less than some more artificial combination of sights and sounds in Wagner's theatre at Bayreuth, has scarcely learned the first lesson in the lore of beauty.

There is enough and to spare for all tastes at Amalfi. The student of architecture may spend hours in the cathedral, pondering over its high-built western-

front, and wonder whether there is more of Moorish or of Gothic in its delicate arcades. The painter may transfer its campanile, glittering like dragon's scales, to his canvas. The lover of the picturesque will wander through its aisle at mass-time, watching the sunlight play upon those upturned Southern faces with their ardent eyes; and happy is he who sees young men and maidens on Whit-Sunday crowding round the chancel-rails to catch the marigolds and gillyflowers scattered from baskets which the priest has blessed. Is this a symbol of the Holy Spirit's gifts, or is it some quaint relic of Pagan *sparsiones*? This question, with the memory of Pompeian *graffiti* in our mind, may well suggest itself in Southern Italy, where old and new faiths are so singularly blended. Then there is Ravello on the hills above. The path winds upward between stone walls tufted with maidenhair; and ever nearer grow the mountains, and the sea-line soars into the sky. An Englishman has made his home here in a ruined Moorish villa, with cool colonnaded cloisters and rose-embowered terraces, lending far prospect over rocky hills and olive-girdled villages to Pæstum's plain. The churches of Ravello have rare mosaics and bronze doors and marble pulpits, older perhaps than those of Tuscany, which tempt the archæologist to ask if Nicholas the Pisan learned his secret here. But who cares to be a sober antiquary at Amalfi? Far pleasanter is it to climb the staircase to the Capuchins, and linger in those caverns of the living rock, and pluck the lemons hanging by the mossy walls; or to row from cove to cove along the shore, watching the fishes swimming in the deeps beneath, and the medusas spreading their filmy bells; to land upon smooth slabs

of rock, where corallines wave to and fro; or to rest on samphire-tufted ledges, when the shadows slant beneath the westering sun.

There is no point in all this landscape which does not make a picture. Painters might even complain that the pictures are too easy and the poetry too facile, just as the musicians find the melodies of this fair land too simple. No effect, carefully sought and strenuously seized, could enhance the mere beauty of Amalfi bathed in sunlight. You have only on some average summer day to sit down and paint the scene. Little scope is afforded to suggestions of far-away weird thoughts, or for elaborately studied motives. Daubigny and Corot are as alien here as Blake or Dürer.

What is wanted, and what no modern artist can successfully recapture from the wasteful past, is the mythopoeic sense—the apprehension of primeval powers akin to man, growing into shape and substance on the borderland between the world and the keen human sympathies it stirs in us. Greek mythology was the proper form of art for scenery like this. It gave the final touch to all its beauties and added to its sensuous charm an inbreathed spiritual life. No exercise of the poetic faculty, far less that metaphysical mood of the reflective consciousness which “leads from nature up to nature’s God,” can now supply this need. From sea and earth and sky, in those creative ages when the world was young, there leaned to greet the men whose fancy made them, forms imagined and yet real—human, divine—the archetypes and everlasting patterns of man’s deepest sense of what is wonderful in nature. Feeling them there, forever there, inalienable, ready to start forth and greet successive genera-

tions—as the Hamadryad greeted Rhaicos from his father's oak—those mythopoets called them by immortal names. All their pent-up longings, all passions that consume, all aspirations that inflame—the desire for the impossible, which is disease; the day-dreams and visions of the night, which are spontaneous poems—were thus transferred to nature. And nature, responsive to the soul that loves her, gave them back transfigured and translated into radiant beings of like substance with mankind. It was thus, we feel, upon these Southern shores that the gods of Greece came into being. The statues in the temples were the true fine flower of all this beauty, the culmination of the poetry which it evoked in hearts that feel and brains that think.

In Italy, far more than in any other part of Europe, the life of the present is imposed upon the strata of successive past lives. Greek, Latin, Moorish, and mediæval civilizations have arisen, flourished, and decayed on nearly the same soil; and it is common enough to find one city, which may have perished twenty centuries ago, neighbor to another that enjoyed its brief prosperity in the middle of our era. There is not, for example, the least sign of either Greek or Roman at Amalfi. Whatever may have been the glories of the republic in the early Middle Ages, they had no relation to the classic past. Yet a few miles off along the bay rise the ancient Greek temples of Pæstum, from a desert—with no trace of any intervening occupants. Poseidonia was founded in the sixth century before Christ, by colonists from Sybaris. Three centuries later the Hellenic element in this settlement, which must already have become a town of no little importance, was submerged by a deluge of recurrent

barbarism. Under the Roman rule it changed its name to Pæstum, and was prosperous. The Saracens destroyed it in the ninth century of our era; and Robert Guiscard carried some of the materials of its buildings to adorn his new town of Salerno. Since then the ancient site has been abandoned to malaria and solitude. The very existence of Pæstum was unknown, except to wandering herdsmen and fishers coasting near its ruined colonnades, until the end of the last century. Yet, strange to relate, after all these revolutions, and in the midst of this total desolation, the only relics of the antique city are three Greek temples, those very temples where the Hellenes, barbarized by their Lucanian neighbors, met to mourn for their lost liberty. It is almost impossible to trace more than the mere circuit of the walls of Poseidonia. Its port, if port it had in Roman days, has disappeared. Its theatre is only just discernible. Still not a column of the great hypæthral temple, built by Sybarite colonists two thousand and five hundred years ago, to be a house for Zeus or for Poseidon, has been injured. The accidents that erased far greater cities, like Syracuse, from the surface of the earth—pillage, earthquake, the fury of fanatics, the slow decay of perishable stone, or the lust of palace-builders in the Middle Ages—have spared those three houses of the gods, over whom, in the days of Alexander, the funeral hymn was chanted by the enslaved Hellenes.

“We do the same,” said Aristoxenus in his *Convivial Miscellanies*, “as the men of Poseidonia, who dwell on the Tyrrhenian Gulf. It befell them, having been at first true Hellenes, to be utterly barbarized, changing to Tyrrhenes or Romans, and altering their

language, together with their other customs. Yet they still observe one Hellenic festival, when they meet together and call to remembrance their old names and bygone institutions; and having lamented one to the other, and shed bitter tears, they afterwards depart to their own homes. Even thus a few of us also, now that our theatres have been barbarized, and this art of music has gone to ruin and vulgarity, meet together and remember what once music was."\*

This passage has a strange pathos, considering how it was penned, and how it has come down to us, tossed by the dark, indifferent stream of time. The Aristoxenus who wrote it was a pupil of the Peripatetic school, born at Tarentum, and therefore familiar with the vicissitudes of Magna Græcia. The study of music was his chief preoccupation; and he used this episode in the agony of an enslaved Greek city, to point his own conservative disgust for innovations in an art of which we have no knowledge left. The works of Aristoxenus have perished, and the fragment I have quoted is imbedded in the gossip of Egyptian Athenæus. In this careless fashion has been opened for us, as it were, a little window on a grief now buried in the oblivion of a hundred generations. After reading his words one May morning, beneath the pediment of Pæstum's noblest ruin, I could not refrain from thinking that if the spirits of those captive Hellenes were to revisit their old habitations, they would change their note of wailing into a thin ghostly pæan when they found that Romans and Lucanians had passed away, that Christians and Saracens had left alike no trace behind, while the houses of their own *ἀντίλιοι*

\* Athenæus, xiv. 632.

*θεοί*—dawn-facing deities—were still abiding in the pride of immemorial strength. Who knows whether buffalo-driver or bandit may not ere now have seen processions of these Poseidonian phantoms, bearing laurels and chanting hymns on the spot where once they fell each on the other's neck to weep? Gathering his cloak around him and cowering closer to his fire of sticks, the night-watcher in those empty colonnades may have mistaken the Hellenic outlines of his shadowy visitants for fevered dreams, and the melody of their evanished music for the whistling of night winds or the cry of owls. So abandoned is Pæstum in its solitude that we know not even what legends may have sprung up round those relics of a mightier age.

The shrine is ruined now; and far away  
To east and west stretch olive-groves, whose shade  
Even at the height of summer noon is gray.

Asphodels sprout upon the plinth decayed  
Of these low columns, and the snake hath found  
Her haunt 'neath altar-steps with weeds o'erlaid.

Yet this was once a hero's temple, crowned  
With myrtle-boughs by lovers, and with palm  
By wrestlers, resonant with sweetest sound

Of flute and fife in summer evening's calm,  
And odorous with incense all the year,  
With nard and spice, and galbanum and balm.

These lines sufficiently express the sense of desolation felt at Pæstum, except that the scenery is more solemn and mournful, and the temples are too august to be the shrine of any simple hero. There are no olives. The sea plunges on its sandy shore within the space of half a mile to westward. Far and wide on either hand stretch dreary fever-stricken marshes. The

plain is bounded to the north and east and south with mountains, purple, snow-peaked, serrated, and grandly broken like the hills of Greece. Driving over this vast level where the Silarus stagnates, the monotony of the landscape is broken now and then by a group of buffaloes standing up to their dewlaps in reeds, by peasants on horseback, with goads in their hands and muskets slung athwart their backs, or by patrols of Italian soldiers crossing and re-crossing on the brigand-haunted roads. Certain portions have been reclaimed from the swamp, and here may be seen white oxen in herds of fifty grazing; or gangs of women at field-labor, with a man to oversee them, cracking a long hunting-whip; or the mares and foals of a famous stud-farm browsing under spreading pines. There are no villages, and the few farm-houses are so widely scattered as to make us wonder where the herdsmen and field-workers, scanty as they are, can possibly be lodged.

At last the three great temples come in sight. The rich orange of the central building contrasts with the paler yellow of its two companions, while the glowing color of all three is splendidly relieved against green vegetation and blue mountain-flanks. Their material is travertine—a calcareous stone formed by the deposit of petrifying waters, which contains fragments of reeds, spiral shells, and other substances, imbedded in the porous limestone. In the flourishing period of old Poseidonia these travertine columns were coated with stucco, worked to a smooth surface, and brilliantly tinted to harmonize with the gay costumes of a Greek festival. Even now this coating of fine sand, mingled with slaked lime and water, can be seen in patches on

the huge blocks of the masonry. Thus treated, the travertine lacked little of the radiance of marble, for it must be remembered that the Greeks painted even the Pentelic cornice of the Parthenon with red and blue. Nor can we doubt that the general effect of brightness suited the glad and genial conditions of Greek life.

All the surroundings are altered now, and the lover of the picturesque may be truly thankful that the hand of time, by stripping the buildings of this stucco, without impairing their proportions, has substituted a new harmony of tone between the native stone and the surrounding landscape, no less sympathetic to the present solitude than the old symphony of colors was to the animated circumstances of a populous Greek city. In this way those critics who defend the polychrome decorations of the classic architects, and those who contend that they cannot imagine any alteration from the present toning of Greek temples for the better, are both right.

In point of color the Pæstum ruins are very similar to those of Girgenti; but owing to their position on a level plain, in front of a scarcely indented sea-shore, we lack the irregularity which adds so much charm to the row of temples on their broken cliff in the old town of Agrigentum. In like manner the celebrated *asymmetreia* of the buildings of the Athenian Acropolis, which causes so much variety of light and shade upon the temple-fronts, and offers so many novel points of view when they are seen in combinations, seems to have been due originally to the exigencies of the ground. At Pæstum, in planning out the city, there can have been no utilitarian reasons for placing the temples at odd angles, either to each other or the

shore. Therefore we see them now almost exactly in line and parallel, though at unequal distances. If something of picturesque effect is thus lost at Pæstum through the flatness of the ground, something of impressive grandeur, on the other hand, is gained by the very regularity with which those phalanxes of massive Doric columns are drawn up to face the sea.

Poseidonia, as the name betokens, was dedicated to the god of the sea; and the coins of the city are stamped with his effigy bearing a trident, and with his sacred animal, the bull. It has therefore been conjectured that the central of the three temples—which was hypæthral and had two entrances, east and west—belonged to Poseidon; and there is something fine in the notion of the god being thus able to pass to and fro from his cella through those sunny peristyles, down to his chariot, yoked with sea-horses, in the brine. Yet hypæthral temples were generally consecrated to Zeus, and it is therefore probable that the traditional name of this vast edifice is wrong. The names of the two other temples, *Tempio di Cerere* and *Basilica*, are wholly unsupported by any proof or probability. The second is almost certainly founded on a mistake; and if we assign the largest of the three shrines to Zeus, one or other of the lesser belonged most likely to Poseidon.

The style of the temples is severe and primitive. In general effect their Doric architecture is far sterner than that adapted by Ictinus to the Parthenon. The entablature seems somewhat disproportioned to the columns and the pediment; and, owing to this cause, there is a general effect of heaviness. The columns, again, are thick-set; nor is the effect of solidity re-

moved by their gradual narrowing from the base upward. The pillars of the *Neptune* are narrowed in a straight line; those of the *Basilica* and *Ceres* by a gentle curve. Study of these buildings, so sublime in their massiveness, so noble in the parsimony of their decoration, so dignified in their employment of the simplest means for the attainment of an indestructible effect of harmony, heightens our admiration for the Attic genius which found in this grand manner of the elder Doric architects resources as yet undeveloped; creating, by slight and subtle alterations of outline, proportion, and rhythm of parts, what may fairly be classed as a style unique, because exemplified in only one transcendent building.

It is difficult not to return again and again to the beauty of coloring at Pæstum. Lying basking in the sun upon a flat slab of stone, and gazing eastward, we overlook a foreground of dappled light and shadow, across which the lizards run—quick streaks of living emerald—making the bunches of yellow rue and little white serpyllum in the fissures of the masonry nod as they hurry past. Then come two stationary columns, built, it seems, of solid gold, when the sunbeams strike along their russet surface. Between them lies the landscape, a medley first of brakefern and asphodel and feathering acanthus and blue spikes of bugloss; then a white farm in the middle distance, roofed with the reddest tiles and sheltered by a velvety umbrella pine. Beyond and above the farm, a glimpse of mountains purple almost to indigo with cloud shadows, and flecked with snow. Still higher—but for this we have to raise our head a little—the free heavens enclosed within the framework of the tawny travertine,

across which sail hawks and flutter jackdaws, sharply cut against the solid sky. Down from the architrave, to make the vignette perfect, hang tufts of crimson snapdragons. Each opening in the peristyle gives a fresh picture.

The temples are overgrown with snapdragons and mallows, yellow asters and lilac gillyflowers, white allium and wild fig. When a breeze passes, the whole of this many-colored tapestry waves gently to and fro. The fields around are flowery enough; but where are the roses? I suppose no one who has read his Virgil at school crosses the plain from Salerno to Pæstum without those words of the *Georgics* ringing in his ears: *biferique rosaria Pæsti*. They have that wonderful Virgilian charm which, by a touch, transforms mere daily sights and sounds, and adds poetic mystery to common things. The poets of ancient Rome seem to have felt the magic of this phrase; for Ovid has imitated the line in his *Metamorphoses*, tamely substituting *tepidi* for the suggestive *biferi*, while again in his *Elegies* he uses the same termination with *odorati* for his epithet. Martial sings of *Pæstanæ rosæ* and *Pæstani gloria ruris*. Even Ausonius, at the very end of Latin literature, draws from the rosaries of Pæstum a pretty picture of beauty doomed to premature decline:

Vidi Pæstano gaudere rosaria cultu  
Exoriente novo roscida Lucifero.

“I have watched the rose-beds that luxuriate on Pæstum’s well-tilled soil, all dewy in the young light of the rising dawn-star.”

What a place, indeed, was this for a rose-garden, spreading far and wide along the fertile plain, with its deep loam reclaimed from swamps and irrigated

by the passing of perpetual streams! But where are the roses now? As well ask, *où sont les neiges d'antan?*

We left Amalfi for Capri in the freshness of an early morning at the end of May. As we stepped into our six-oared boat the sun rose above the horizon, flooding the sea with gold and flashing on the terraces above Amalfi. High up along the mountains hung pearly and empurpled mists, set like resting-places between a world too beautiful and heaven too far for mortal feet. Not a breath of any wind was stirring. The water heaved with a scarcely perceptible swell, and the vapors lifted gradually as the sun's rays grew in power. Here the hills descend abruptly on the sea, ending in cliffs where light reflected from the water dances. Huge caverns open in the limestone; on their edges hang stalactites like beards, and the sea within sleeps dark as night. For some of these caves the maidenhair fern makes a shadowy curtain; and all of them might be the home of Proteus, or of Calypso, by whose side her mortal lover passed his nights in vain homesickness:

*ἐν σπέσσῃ γλαφυροῖσι παρ' οὐκ ἐθέλων ἐθελοίση.*

This is a truly Odyssean journey. Soon the islands of the Sirens come in sight—bare bluffs of rock, shaped like galleys taking flight for the broad sea. As we row past in this ambrosial weather, the oarsmen keeping time and ploughing furrows in the fruitless fields of Nereus, it is not difficult to hear the siren voices—for earth and heaven and sea make melodies far above mortal singing. The water round the Galli—so the islands are now called, as antiquaries tell us, from an ancient fortress named Guallo—is very deep,

and not a sign of habitation is to be seen upon them. In bygone ages they were used as prisons; and many doges of Amalfi languished their lives away upon those shadeless stones, watching the sea around them blaze like a burnished shield at noon, and the peaks of Capri deepen into purple when the west was glowing after sunset with the rose and daffodil of Southern twilight.

The end of the Sorrentine promontory, Point Campanella, is absolutely barren—gray limestone, with the scantiest overgrowth of rosemary and myrtle. A more desolate spot can hardly be imagined. But now the morning breeze springs up behind; sails are hoisted, and the boatmen ship their oars. Under the albatross wings of our lateen sails we scud across the freshening waves. The precipice of Capri soars against the sky, and the Bay of Naples expands before us with those sweeping curves and azure amplitude that all the poets of the world have sung. Even thus the mariners of ancient Hellas rounded this headland when the world was young. Rightly they named yon rising ground, beneath Vesuvius, Posilippo—rest from grief. Even now, after all those centuries of toil, though the mild mountain has been turned into a mouth of murderous fire, though Roman emperors and Spanish despots have done their worst to mar what nature made so perfect, we may here lay down the burden of our cares, gaining tranquillity by no mysterious lustral rites, no penitential prayers or offerings of holocausts, but by the influence of beauty in the earth and air, and by sympathy with a people unspoiled in their healthful life of labor alternating with simple joy.

The last hour of the voyage was beguiled by stories of our boatmen, some of whom had seen service on

distant seas, while others could tell of risks on shore and love adventures. They showed us how the tunny-nets were set, and described the solitary life of the tunny-watchers, in their open boats, waiting to spear the monsters of the deep entangled in the chambers made for them beneath the waves. How much of Æschylean imagery, I reflected, is drawn from this old fisher's art—the toils of Clytemnestra and the tragedy of Psyttaleia rising to my mind. One of the crew had his little son with him, a child of six years old: and when the boy was restless, his father spoke of Barbarossa and Timberio (*sic*) to keep him quiet; for the memory of the Moorish pirate and the mighty emperor is still alive here. The people of Capri are as familiar with Tiberius as the Bretons with King Arthur; and the hoof-mark of illustrious crime is stamped upon the island.

Capri offers another example of the versatility of Southern Italy. If Amalfi brings back to us the naval and commercial prosperity of the early Middle Ages; if Pæstum remains a monument of the oldest Hellenic civilization, Capri, at a few miles' distance, is dedicated to the Roman emperor who made it his favorite residence, when, life-weary with the world and all its shows, he turned these many peaks and slumbering caves into a summer palace for the nursing of his brain-sick phantasy. Already, on landing, we are led to remember that from this shore was loosed the galley bearing that great letter—*verbosa et grandis epistola*—which undid Sejanus and shook Rome. Riding to Ana-Capri and the Salto di Tiberio, exploring the remains of his favorite twelve villas, and gliding over the smooth waters paved with the white marbles of his baths, we are forever attended by the same for-

bidding spectre. Here, perchance, were the *sedes arcanarum libidinum* whereof Suetonius speaks; the Spintrian medals, found in these recesses, still bear witness that the biographer trusted no mere fables for the picture he has drawn. Here, too, below the Villa Jovis, gazing seven hundred feet sheer down into the waves, we tread the very parapet whence fell the victims of that maniac lust for blood. "After long and exquisite torments," says the Roman writer, "he ordered condemned prisoners to be cast into the sea before his eyes; marines were stationed near to pound the fallen corpses with poles and oars, lest haply breath should linger in their limbs." The Neapolitan Museum contains a little bass-relief representing Tiberius, with the well-known features of the Claudian house, seated astride upon a donkey, with a girl before him. A slave is leading the beast and its burden to a terminal statue under an olive-tree. This curious relic, discovered some while since at Capri, haunted my fancy as I climbed the olive-planted slopes to his high villa on the Arx Tiberii. It is some relief, amid so much that is tragic in the associations of this place, to have the horrible Tiberius burlesqued and brought into donkey-riding relation with the tourist of to-day. And what an ironical revenge of time it is that his famous Salto should be turned into a restaurant, where the girls dance tarantella for a few coppers; that a toothless hermit should occupy a cell upon the very summit of his Villa Jovis; and that the Englishwoman's comfortable hotel should be called *Timberio* by the natives! A spiritualist might well believe that the emperor's ghost was forced to haunt the island, and to expiate his old atrocities by gazing on these modern vulgarisms.

Few problems suggested by history are more darkly fascinating than the madness of despots; and of this madness, whether inherent in their blood or encouraged by the circumstance of absolute autocracy, the emperors of the Claudian and Julian houses furnish the most memorable instance.\* It is this that renders Tiberius ever present to our memory at Capri. Nor will the student of Suetonius forget his even more memorable grand-nephew Caligula. The following passage is an episode from the biography of that imperial maniac, whose portrait in green basalt, with the strain of dire mental tension on the forehead, is still so beautiful that we are able at this distance of time to pity more than loathe him. "Above all, he was tormented with nervous irritation, by sleeplessness; for he enjoyed not more than three hours of nocturnal repose, nor even these in pure untroubled rest, but agitated by phantasmata of portentous augury; as, for example, upon one occasion, among other spectral visions, he fancied that he saw the sea, under some definite impersonation, conversing with himself. Hence it was, and from this incapacity of sleeping, and from weariness of lying awake, that he had fallen into habits of ranging all night long through the palace, sometimes throwing himself on a couch, sometimes wandering along the vast corridors, watching for the earliest dawn, and anxiously wishing its approach." Those corridors, or loggie, where Caligula spent his wakeful hours, opened perchance upon this Bay of Naples, if

\* De Quincey, in his essay on *The Caesars*, has worked out this subject with such artistic vividness that no more need be said. From his pages I have quoted the paraphrastic version of Suetonius that follows.

not upon the sea-waves of his favorite Porto d' Anzio; for we know that one of his great follies was a palace built above the sea on piles at Baiæ; and where else could *Pelagus*, with his cold azure eyes and briny locks, have more appropriately terrified his sleep with prophecy conveyed in dreams? The very nature of this vision, selected for such special comment by Suetonius as to show that it had troubled Caligula profoundly, proves the fantastic nature of the man, and justifies the hypothesis of insanity.

But it is time to shake off the burden of the past. Only students, carrying superfluity of culture in their knapsacks, will ponder over the imperial lunatics who made Capri and Baiæ fashionable in the days of ancient Rome. Neither Tiberius nor Caligula, nor yet Ferdinand of Aragon or Bomba, for that matter, has been able to leave trace of vice or scar of crime on nature in this Eden. A row round the island, or a supper-party in the loggia above the sea at sunset-time is no less charming now, in spite of Roman or Spanish memories, than when the world was young.

Sea-mists are frequent in the early summer mornings, swathing the cliffs of Capri in impenetrable wool and brooding on the perfectly smooth water till the day-wind rises. Then they disappear like magic, rolling in smoke-wreaths from the surface of the sea, condensing into clouds and climbing the hill-sides like Oceanides in quest of Prometheus, or taking their station on the watch-towers of the world, as in the chorus of the *Nephelai*. Such a morning may be chosen for the *giro* of the island. The blue grotto loses nothing of its beauty, but rather gains by contrast, when passing from dense fog you find yourself

transported to a world of wavering subaqueous sheen. It is only through the opening of the very topmost arch that a boat can glide into this cavern; the arch itself spreads downward through the water, so that all the light is transmitted from beneath and colored by the sea. The grotto is domed in many chambers; and the water is so clear that you can see the bottom, silvery, with black-finned fishes diapered upon the blue-white sand. The flesh of a diver in this water showed like the faces of children playing at snap-dragon; all around him the spray leaped up with living fire; and when the oars struck the surface, it was as though a phosphorescent sea had been smitten, and the drops ran from the blades in blue pearls. I have only once seen anything (outside the magic world of a pantomime) to equal these effects of blue and silver; and that was when I made my way into an ice-cave in the Great Aletsch glacier—not an artificial gallery such as they cut at Grindelwald, but a natural cavern, arched, hollowed into fanciful recesses, and hung with stalactites of pendent ice. The difference between the glacier-cavern and the sea-grotto was that in the former all the light was transmitted through transparent sides, so that the whole was one uniform azure, except in rare places where little chinks opened upward to the air, and the light of day came glancing with a roseate flush. In the latter the light sent from beneath through the water played upon a roof of rock; reflections intermingled with translucence; and a greater variety of light and shadow compensated the lack of that strange sense of being shut within a solid gem.

Numberless are the caves at Capri. The so-called green grotto has the beauty of moss-agate in its liquid

floor; the red grotto shows a warmer chord of color, and where there is no other charm to notice, endless beauty may be found in the play of sunlight upon roofs of limestone, tinted with yellow, orange, and pale pink, mossed over, hung with fern, and catching tones of blue or green from the still deeps beneath.

Sheets of water, wherever found, are the most subtle heighteners of color. To those who are familiar with Venetian or Mantuan sunsets, who have seen the flocks of flamingoes reflected on the lagoons of Tunis, or who have watched stormy red flakes tossed from crest to crest of great Atlantic waves on our own coasts, this need hardly be said. Yet I cannot leave this beauty of the sea at Capri without touching on a melodrama of light and color I once saw at Castellamare. It was a festa-night, when the people sent up rockets and fireworks of every hue from the harbor breakwater. The surf rolled shoreward like a bath of molten metals, all confused of blue and red and green and gold—dying dolphin tints that burned strangely beneath the purple skies and tranquil stars. Boats at sea hung out their crimson cressets, flickering in long lines on the bay; and larger craft moved slowly with rows of lamps defining their curves; while the full moon shed over all her “vitreous pour, just tinged with blue.” To some tastes this mingling of natural and artificial effects would seem unworthy of sober notice; but I confess to having enjoyed it with childish eagerness like music never to be forgotten.

After a day upon the water it is pleasant to rest at sunset in the loggia above the sea. The Bay of Naples stretches far and wide in front, beautiful by reason chiefly of the long fine line descending from

Vesuvius, dipping almost to a level and then gliding up to join the highlands of the north. Now sun and moon begin to mingle—waning and waxing splendors. The cliffs above our heads are still blushing a deep game-color, like the heart of some tea-rose; when lo, the touch of the huntress is laid upon those eastern pinnacles, and the horizon glimmers with her rising. Was it on such a night that Ferdinand of Aragon fled from his capital before the French, with eyes turned ever to the land he loved, chanting, as he leaned from his galley's stern, that melancholy psalm—"Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain"—and seeing Naples dwindle to a white blot on the purple shore?

Our journey takes the opposite direction. Farewell to Capri, welcome to Sorrento! The roads are sweet with scent of acacia and orange-flowers. When you walk in a garden at night, the white specks beneath your feet are fallen petals of lemon-blossoms. Over the walls hang cataracts of roses, honey-pale clusters of the Banksia rose, and pink bushes of the China rose, growing as we never see them grow with us. The gray rocks wave with gladiolus—feathers of crimson, set amid tufts of rosemary and myrtle and tree-spurge. In the clefts of sandstone and behind the orchard walls, sleeps a dark green night of foliage, in the midst of which gleam globed oranges, and lemons dropping like great pearls of palest amber dew. It is difficult to believe that the lemons have not grown into length by their own weight, as though mere hanging on the bough prevented them from being round—so waxen are they. Overhead soar stone-pines—a roof of sombre green, a lattice-work of strong red

branches, through which the moon peers wonderfully. One part of this marvellous *piano* is bare rock tufted with keen-scented herbs, and sparsely grown with locust-trees and olives. Another waves from sea to summit with beech-copse and oak-woods, as verdant as the most abundant English valley. Another region turns its hoary raiment of olive-gardens to the sun and sea, or flourishes with fig and wine. Everywhere the houses of men are dazzling white, perched on natural coigns of vantage, clustered on the brink of brown cliffs, nestling under mountain eaves, or piled up from the sea-beach in ascending tiers, until the broad knees of the hills are reached, and great Pan, the genius of solitude in nature, takes unto himself a region yet untenanted by man. The occupations of the sea and land are blended together on this shore; and the people are both blithe and gentle. It is true that their passions are upon the surface, and that the knife is ready to their hand. But the combination of fierceness and softness in them has an infinite charm when one has learned by observation that their lives are laborious and frugal, and that their honesty is hardly less than their vigor. Happy, indeed, are they—so happy that, but for crimes accumulated through successive generations by bad governors, and but for superstitions cankering the soul within, they might deserve what Shelley wrote of his imagined island in *Epipsychedion*.

THE END.







